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2026 TRIATHLON

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IRONMAN WORLD CHAMPS

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THE MEN'S FINAL IN NICE**

THE STATE OF SWIMRUN

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seeing a revival in the UK?

PLUS

2026 EVENT GUIDE

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BOARDMAN SLR 9.8 TESTED

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▲ Casper Stornes takes the win at the Ironman World Championships in Nice... His first full-distance gold!

FROM THE EDITOR...

Editors can't help but look for themes when putting together an issue of a magazine – and if there was a way to sum up this issue of **220**, it would have to be this – hard work. While it might be tempting to think of our professional athletes as superhuman, or more fortunate than us age-groupers (all that time to train and no day job!), in reality they likely work harder than all of us. Plus, add all the pressure to perform and the increased heartbreak and stress injury or illness causes and it's evident there's much more than the podium celebrations to contend with. That hard work can create stunning results when it all comes together though and from the Norwegian clean sweep at the men's Ironman final in Nice (p24) to Lucy Charles-Barclay's Kona prep (p16) it has to be worth it. Hope the issue inspires you!



Helen

Helen Webster, editor



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INSIDE THE MEN'S IRONMAN WORLD CHAMPS

The men's race headed to Nice for the final time and saw a historic podium as well as a few surprises... Here's all the action!



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With a stellar return from injury and illness and two T100 wins to celebrate, we catch up with Lucy Charles-Barclay on the eve of Kona.



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GETTY FOR IRONMAN

START



DIVE INTO THE WORLD OF TRI



**THE
BIG
PIC**

GB's Will Draper cuts a lonely figure at Challenge Almere on 13 September. In reality, he kept a steady gap of around 50secs for much of the final 10km of the marathon, before catching and then sprinting past a surprised Tristan Olij (NED) to take the European long-distance title in a time of 7:41:40.



▲ The historic channel island of Jersey hosted the penultimate race in the 2025 Supertri League on 21 September. Inclement weather provided an extra challenge to the nine-stage triathlon format, but, ultimately, victories would be awarded to Luxembourg's Jeanne Lehair and Csongor Lehmann (HUN), the latter a maiden Supertri win.



◀ Giving Roth and its Solar Hill a run for its money was Tenby's Heartbreak Hill at Ironman Wales, on 21 September. Like its German counterpart, racing this stretch of road is fast becoming a must-do moment among the endurance community.

► Beth Potter (GBR) pulls clear of Lisa Tertsch (GER) at WTCS Karlovy Vary. The 2023 world champion would go on to win with a 13sec margin over Taylor Spivey (USA), and Tertsch in third, for her first victory in almost two years. Potter was visibly emotional at the line, following the unexpected death of a training partner only weeks earlier.

▼ The pro men get to work on one of Karlovy Vary's hills, on 14 September. The new WTCS course provided the perfect showcase for a new generation of exciting talent – namely Germany's Henry Graf, who in his fifth-ever series start stormed to a debut win, and GB's Oliver Conway, who finished fourth in his WTCS debut, just 3secs off the podium.





XTERRAMEDIA



T100

▲ Despite being more mud than man by the finish line at Xterra Trentino (25 September), Felix Forissier's 2:44:18 performance was enough to secure his first world title. For the women, the fastest bike and run splits helped Loanne Duvoisin (CHE) lift the crown in 3:15:18.

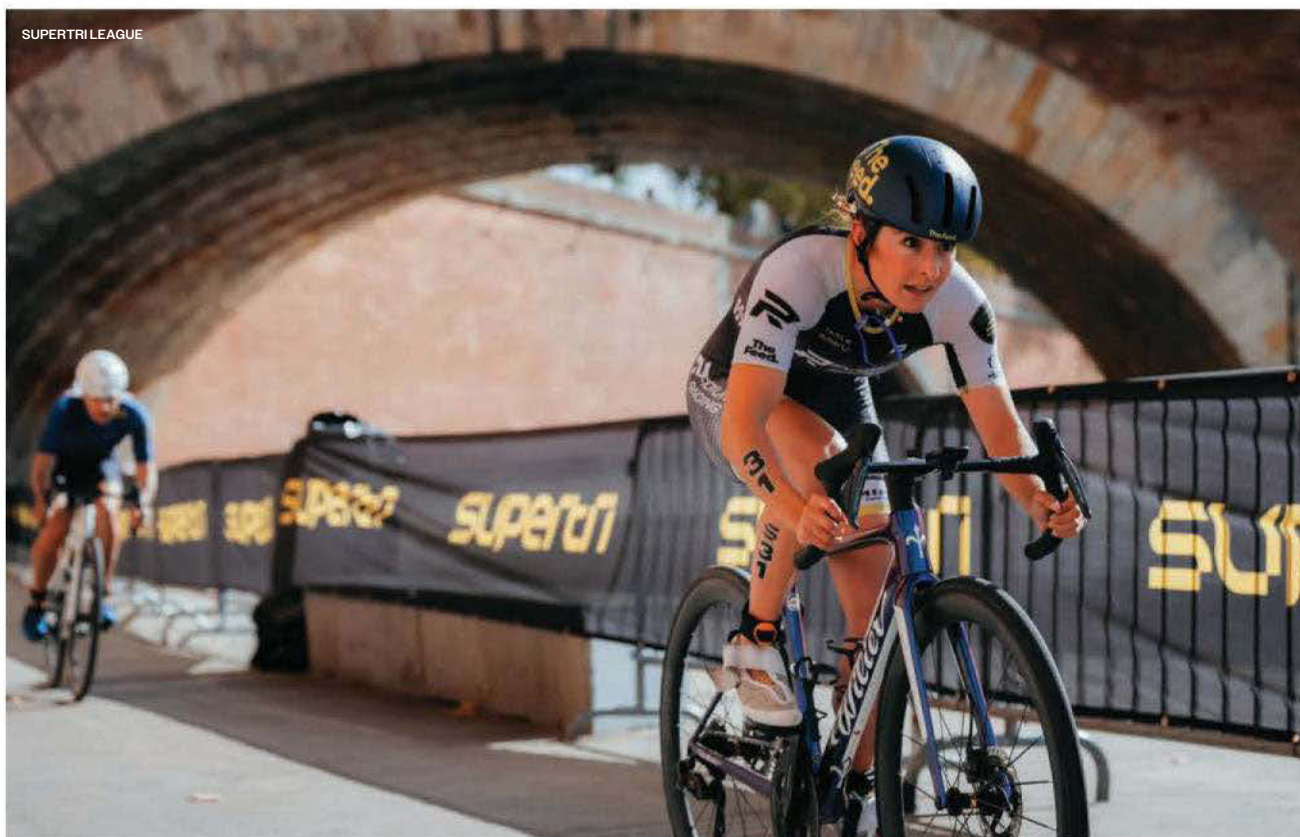
◀ The podium-placers celebrate at Spain T100 on 20 September. It would be a GB sweep in the women's race, as Lucy Charles-Barclay clocked her second 100km win of the season and was followed in by Kate Waugh and Jess Learmonth. Hayden Wilde, meanwhile, made it four wins from four starts, and leads the men's rankings with three races to go.

► GB's Beth Potter's second consecutive WTCS victory, in Weihai on 26 September, put her level pegging with reigning champion Cassandre Beaugrand in the rankings, and has set the scene for a Grand Final showdown in Australia on 19 October.

▼ Jeanne Lehair mid-race at Supertri Toulouse on 5 October, the final round of the 2025 series, and perhaps the greatest day of the 29-year-old Luxembourg's life – she would go on to win the race, the title and receive a marriage proposal from boyfriend Nathan on the podium. She said oui! All of which slightly overshadowed an equally impressive performance from Csongor Lehmann (HUN), who also won his first Supertri title.



WORLD TRIATHLON





GETTY IMAGES



TIM HEMING

Cutting through the spin of tri to address the issues that matter, Tim is a sports journalist who has written extensively on triathlon for the national press.

TENBY'S TRIUMPH: WHY IRONMAN WALES STANDS ALONE

It's tough, unpredictable and utterly unique – but Ironman Wales delivers a race-day atmosphere few events in the world can match

If you were to design the perfect triathlon course, what would it look like?

Perhaps a sea swim, rather than a reedy river or lake. A scenic, largely traffic-free bike course with a tunnel of spectators on the occasional punchy climb.

A run course lined with support to help overcome the demons of the final hours, and a welcoming finish chute filled with cheers and pumping tunes.

It would need some kind of distinct flavour and appeal, ideally on an accessible footprint so that the logistics of registering, racking, recovering, and departing don't add additional stress for you or your

support crew. Through a wider lens, it would include a positive impact on the local economy, be embraced by residents and businesses, and garner even more support from curious locals to create a culture that anticipates – rather than dreads – the next edition.

How often do all these factors come together? Not as often as we might think, which is why it's an environment to be cherished when it does.

Challenge has Roth, a small town in Bavaria that becomes a triathlon mecca for one week every July; World Triathlon has Hamburg – more of a city crit circuit – that is known to draw big crowds. Supertri



is finding that Toulouse in southern France, the venue for its recent grand final, is producing a similar vibe.

Ironman has Hawaii, of course, the most sought-after triathlon location in the world, and other gold standard events such as Frankfurt, Kalmar or Nice.

And it also has little old Tenby, which in many ways shouldn't work, but does – and arguably better than anywhere else. Held in autumn at the mercy of changeable weather (and sometimes jellyfish), its timing in close proximity to world championships means it will never attract the very best professionals.

It's devoid of broadcast footage marketing its wares and is notoriously tough rendering times almost immaterial, except for the dreaded cut-offs which loom over athletes who on other courses wouldn't give them a second thought. Whereas in other events this would be seen as off-putting, at Ironman Wales, it just adds to the challenge.

The Pembrokeshire seaside resort is a unicorn as a host. The swim on its North Beach is orientated so it is sheltered enough to have a low risk of cancellation, with a unique 1km run through lined streets to transition.

The flagship ascent from Saundersfoot, tackled twice, is close enough to town for supporters to walk to, and it's backed up by a run that, when the bulk of the 2,000-strong field are coming through, has barely a quiet spot on the entire course.

It's been running for 15 years and for many – including former professional rugby player, Shane Williams – “slaying the dragon” has become an annual fix. This year, Wales' record try scorer reflected how the support improves every time.

It might not be possible to completely replace the feeling evoked by the roar of 75,000 passionate fans in the Principality Stadium, but it's telling that Williams turns to this event to try. **END**

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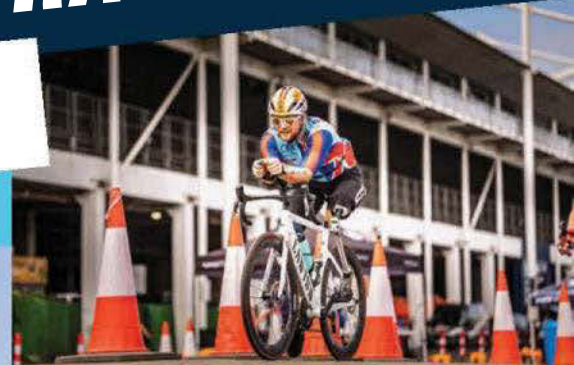
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Entries to the London T100 Triathlon 2026 are now open! Secure your place on one of the world's largest triathlon start lines before it sells out by winning this month's exclusive competition. T100 London will be held over the weekend of 25–26 July 2026. Experience the thrill of racing through the heart of the capital on an iconic, closed-road city centre course, surrounded by thousands of fellow athletes and cheering crowds.

T100 is the new distance that combines endurance with speed. If you take on the full 100km distance you'll race a 2km swim, 80km on the bike and finish with an 18km run. It's long enough to be a real challenge, but not so long it's out of reach for most triathletes with time to train.

With closed roads and a festival atmosphere it will be a weekend to remember! Plus you'll have the chance to see the pros in action – the 2025 event was won by long-distance superstars Lucy Charles-Barclay and Hayden Wilde.

If the 100km isn't for you though don't worry – as part of this prize you can choose your race distance and there's also an Olympic, sprint or supersprint distance to take on if you prefer shorter events. Plus new for 2026 are open-water swim events of 1 or 2 miles, allowing the chance to swim in the iconic docklands!

PLUS RACE SWAG

Not only will you win your race place, but this prize includes a package of T100 swag to help you on your journey to race success. Our lucky winner will receive a T100 backpack, T-shirt and sunglasses worth an additional £150 approx.

HOW TO ENTER

Ready to bag entry to the hottest race in town as well as the package of race kit? Grab your chance of winning by heading to 220triathlon.com/win and answering this question:

Who won the women's T100 race in London in 2025?

- A: Lucy Charles-Barclay
- B: Emma Pallant-Browne
- C: Georgia Taylor-Brown



LUCY CHARLES-BARCLAY

Q&A



T100 THAT CAMERAMAN

THE MULTISPORT MERMAID

One of triathlon's most relatable stars, Lucy Charles-Barclay's journey from open-water swimmer to world champion triathlete is inspiring a generation. Here we talk recovery from illness and injury, battle braids, why T100 London was such an important race this year and how her two dogs, Lola and Pickle, form a crucial part of her team as she trains towards Kona...

INTERVIEW
HELEN WEBSTER

IMAGES
T100
GETTY IMAGES FOR IRONMAN

Career highlights

Lucy's highlights are so numerous we've just listed her first-place finishes here, with more no doubt to come...

- 1st, Ironman Lanzarote, 2017
- 1st, Challenge The Championship, 2017
- 1st, Ironman African Championship, 2018
- 1st, Challenge The Championship, 2018
- 1st, Ironman African Championship, 2019
- 1st, Challenge The Championship, 2019
- 1st, Ironman 70.3 Staffordshire, 2019
- 1st, 70.3 European Champs, 2021
- 1st, Collins Cup, 2021
- 1st, Ironman 70.3 World Champs, 2021
- 1st, Long Course World Champs, 2022
- 1st, Ironman World Champs Kona, 2023
- 1st, T100 London, 2025
- 1st, T100 Spain, 2025

Returning to London and celebrating the win at this year's T100 home race.



WOUT ROOSSENBOOM

Here at 220 Triathlon, we've known Lucy almost since she first turned pro in 2016 after switching paths from swimming. In fact, look back at some of our training photoshoots from the early years of her tri career and you'll see her and now-husband Reece in several of our photoshoots.

A meteoric rise since then has seen multiple wins over various distances with Ironman and 70.3 her key strength, culminating in taking the Ironman World Championships title in Kona in 2023 after placing second four times in previous years. Behind the race wins though, have been difficulties with injuries and after being diagnosed a year ago with Coeliac disease, the need to change her approach to nutrition.

Meeting Lucy for this interview while she's in London for the T100 race, it's clear she's in a good place though. Leading a swim training session for media and some lucky age-groupers, it's clear that behind the ever-friendly smile and willingness to share training tips and advice is a drive to train and race hard, as well as to continue enjoying the journey. Read on as we catch up on everything from Kona prep to battle braids, T100 strategies to inspiring the next generation...

220 Triathlon: Congratulations on your recent wins at T100 races in

London and Spain! What is it you enjoy about the newer 100km race distance?

Lucy Charles-Barclay: Well, the T100 distance from what I have found is so competitive, the racing is just full on from the gun! There's no let up, and I feel like that's what I love about it, plus it really challenges me in a new way.

Obviously, I love the long-distance racing as well, but the T100 is bringing in the long-course athletes, plus the Olympic-distance athletes are stepping up as well. It's just getting faster and more difficult every year. I love that it is such a big challenge, and it's definitely improving my triathlon game, which ultimately as a professional athlete is all you want to do.

Taking the win in London was definitely a magical moment. Such a great day. I think it really felt like almost turning the page on a chapter that's been really difficult with injuries and health issues and yeah... being able to put it all together on home soil in front of friends, family, all the fans that were there – especially after the DNF the year before – I think it just was so, so special and everyone could see the emotion. I think quite a lot of people shared in that emotion as well. So a really special day, and definitely one that has given me a lot of confidence for the rest of the season.

220: Do you find this slightly shorter distance to be more tactical than iron-distance racing?

LCB: Yes definitely. T100 is challenging me in different ways, and I mean, we're here today, doing transition training with you all [Lucy went on to demo transition skills for the journalists and athletes attending on the day], which as a long-distance athlete it something I've never really really focused on my training.

Sometimes the long distance come down to small margins. I mean, I've come second at Challenge Roth before by about 9 seconds... If I'd done a bit of transition work there, that could have been it. So it still can come down to the small margins in long distance, but T100 is all about every margin. If you make a ▶

"It's about deciding what excites you the most to get out of bed and train every single day, to push yourself hard."

Lucy took the Ironman World Championship win in 2023, after placing second four times previously.



mistake that can cost you not just one place, it could be three places, so it's just about refining those skills, then hopefully I can also then take them up to the longer distance.

220: There are so many race series and options to choose from now. How to you decide when and where to race?

LCB: Yeah, it's really, really difficult! I think as a professional athlete nowadays, you could race every single weekend over any different distance from the Supertri all the way up to Ironman.

It's about really deciding what excites you the most to get out of bed and train every single day, to push yourself hard. At the moment the T100 is really doing that for me. Obviously, I'm still racing over the Ironman distance as well though, which I love because it's always been a challenge.

"I look at my training from years before and it was like a roller coaster where I'd have a really good block, and then it would drop off again and then I'd be chasing my tail to get back, whereas this year the graph looks really nice."

220: We've got to mention Kona with the women's race heading to Hawaii again where you won in 2023. So how's your prep going?

LCB: Really good. For me, this year was all about having a gradual build throughout the year and staying healthy. Just over a year ago I found out I had Coeliac disease so it's been a real journey. As soon as I got that diagnosis I was, like, okay, that's fine. I know what I'm dealing with now. They did say it would take six months to a year to actually heal my body from that, so I feel like I've got to that point now.

I feel really healthy. I feel really

strong, and we've just had a really good consistent year of building up and not doing anything too crazy in training. I look at my training from the years before and it was like a roller coaster where I'd have a really good block, get injured, and then it would drop off again and then I'd be chasing my tail to get back, whereas this year it feels like the graph looks really nice, it's just been this nice progressive build. So hopefully that'll put me in good stead for Kona this year. Hopefully I can deliver an all-round performance and who knows what that result might be.

220: As a professional athlete, how do you cope with illness and injury?

LCB: Professional sport is a roller coaster of highs and lows for sure and I've definitely experienced that, I've had my fair share with winning a world title and then



Swimming is Lucy's superpower, so much so that she holds several triathlon course records and her bike is painted in mermaid colours!

JAMES MITCHELL/T100



@BY_WOUT/T100

being injured so it's really tough. Some real lows last year were not finishing the T100 race, my home race here in London and then two days before the world championship getting injured... But this year I've put all that behind me and tried to stay really positive and enjoy the training.

I've been reminding myself why I do this – because I really love it. It's also great getting messages from people saying I've inspired them to do their first triathlon as well as from young girls wearing battle braids – it reminds me that this is why I do it, it's so much more fulfilling than my own journey and that helps a lot.

How have you coped with your Coeliac disease diagnosis and what can you share that may help others?

LCB: It's definitely been a really steep learning curve for me. Like, initially, you're like, 'oh yeah, just, you have to be gluten-free'. So, obviously, you're not eating pasta

▲ The T100 race in Singapore saw Lucy start to show her return to form with a silver medal.

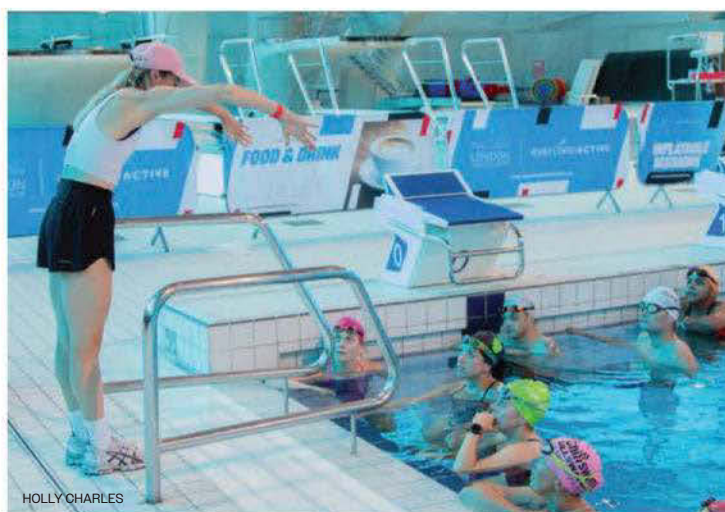
and pizza, and things like that, and that can be quite easy, to just to go for the gluten-free option.

But it's eating out that's really difficult, or we can't really get a takeaway anymore because of the cross-contamination that can happen when the food is being prepared. And unless I'm standing in the kitchen, observing what the chef's doing, I can't guarantee that

no gluten has made its way into my meal. For example, even if I eat out and I wanted to have chips, they need to go in a separate fryer to anything that may have been coated in breadcrumbs.

I do feel so much better from going gluten-free, so it's definitely been worth it. We've made a lot more home-cooked meals. Also, there's a company called Field ▶

▶ Lucy demonstrates a sculling drill on our training day with her in London.



HOLLY CHARLES

“With triathlon I go through phases of loving each discipline more than the others.”



MIRANDAHDZ/T100

Doctor that actually deliver meals for me, that are completely gluten-free and Coeliac-approved, so that's helped a lot because I think the biggest thing as an athlete is I need so many calories to fuel what I'm doing, and when you can't eat carbs it's tricky. So now I've had to switch more to rice and potatoes rather than pasta and pizza that I used to carb-load on before races. It's crazy to me that I'd go into races basically poisoning myself before the race.

I still don't always get it right, and sometimes you don't know what actually made its way into your food to make you feel unwell, so that's quite difficult. Even the smallest amount of gluten can make your immune system start to attack your gut. I think the positive thing though is where I've shared my journey more people have gone and got tested and found out

they've got it as well so I think it's important to keep sharing.

220: Are you excited about both races being back together in Kona from next year?

LCB: Obviously Kona is so special. When I did win [in 2023], it was a women's-only day, and you felt that amazing positive energy and everyone there absolutely loved it and was so supportive. But when I first went to Kona, me and Reece were both racing there and we were on that journey together. And I think there's many couples that do travel and race together and that's so special

I think as long as on that day the women are still getting the equal coverage they deserve it's fantastic, and I know Ironman have been changing their selection policies and things like that to actually get

▲ The T100 race in Spain in September 2025 where Lucy posted a 01:55:48 bike split.

▼ With her husband Reece, who is a key part of 'Team Charles-Barclay'.



GETTY

more women on the start line, so all of those things are really positive.

But for me, I think it will be really special to go back to that one day event because I came into the sport as an age-grouper and a fan of the sport, and when I'm racing, I love actually seeing what's going on in the men's race as well, which is a nice little distraction sometimes, we're all very supportive of each other. So, I think, yeah, that'll be a special day in 2026.

220: It's very much 'Team Charles-Barclay', not a solo mission. Does that help?

LCB: It's amazing to have a team around me. It's quite a small, tightly-knit team! My sister Holly helps share my journey on social media. She does such a good job of that on YouTube and on my Instagram and my husband Reece is

there every single day, supporting me. My coach is Dan Lorang and he sets the full programme, then Reece is there every day, helping me execute it to the best of my ability.

We just went away on a training camp, and my parents came with us. Dad was head chef, mum was doing the laundry. Reese was doing every other job under the sun. Holly was there doing the media... It really, really helped, just to have them there. And also, my dogs are an amazing part of that as well, just to be that perfect distraction – when training becomes a lot I'll just go and walk them.

And then obviously the amazing sponsors I have that support me on my journey as well – and go along with my crazy ideas that I have at times, like mermaid-painted bikes and things!

220: In terms of a pro career, you've maybe had a much longer career than you might have done if you'd stayed in swimming. Is that something you think about? Plus is swimming still your favourite discipline?

A day training with Lucy Charles-Barclay

"Every day is different, but usually involves swim, bike and run!"

A typical day would be getting up pretty early, doing somewhere between 5-7km of swimming, having a second breakfast after and then usually doing anywhere between three to five hours on the bike, with some intensity on that or some at race pace.

Then it will either be a brisk run or there'll be a run at the end of the day, anywhere between probably 10-15km of, quite steady running, sometimes throwing some strides or some pace work. Oh – I also do some strength training when I can throw that in as well!"

Swimming is Lucy's background, but her morning swims are still immense!



LCB: Yeah, definitely! In swimming you get to your early 20s, and you're done. In triathlon it's a completely different world – for example you've got Annie Haug who only just retired and was in her 40s, still breaking world records and winning. I just feel so grateful I found this sport.

With triathlon I go through phases of loving each discipline more than the other. I obviously love swimming. It's my background, and when I'm swimming really well, I enjoy it, but it's hard to not compare myself now to the times I used to be able to achieve as a swimmer, and it can be frustrating. But obviously, now I can cycle and run way faster than I ever dreamed of then.

I think, when running is going well it's my favourite because it's just so easy – you can just put your shoes on and go. As for cycling I do love it, but it can be frustrating with all the mechanics that go with it!

220: Can you just give us an overview of what we did in the session this morning and why it's important that athletes do those drills that you recommend.

LCB: Yeah, I think most people



▲ Crossing the line to win the Ironman World Champs in Kona in 2023.

coming into triathlon maybe don't have a swim background, so it's the thing they're most anxious about or just haven't really ever done before. And if you haven't done swimming from a young age those small technical things are just really alien, so just really trying to strip it back to the basics like sculling drills and things like that, where it's really helping you get that feel for the water that everyone speaks about.

Even myself, at my level, I try and do drills once or twice a week just to reinforce that and I find if I do that at the beginning of the session, then when I go into my main set of the session, I actually just feel so much better. **220**

▼ Breaking the tape to take the win at Spain's T100 event.



MIRANDAHDZ/T100

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RIVIERA REWRITES HISTORY

With the Ironman Worlds returning to Hawaii in 2026, Nice was keen to put on a proper send-off for the men's championship on 14 September. Three friends from Norway fulfilled the French city's wishes and then some...

CAPTIONS LIZ BARRETT **IMAGES** GETTY IMAGES FOR IRONMAN

Norway's Caspar Stornes celebrates winning his first-ever Ironman race – the 2025 Ironman World Championship in Nice, France, on his Champs debut. Stornes's winning time of 7:51:36 included a 2:29:22 marathon, the first time any triathlete had gone sub-2:30hrs in an Ironman Worlds. Stornes also lobbied an impressive 15mins off 2023 champion Sam Laidlow's winning time on the same course.

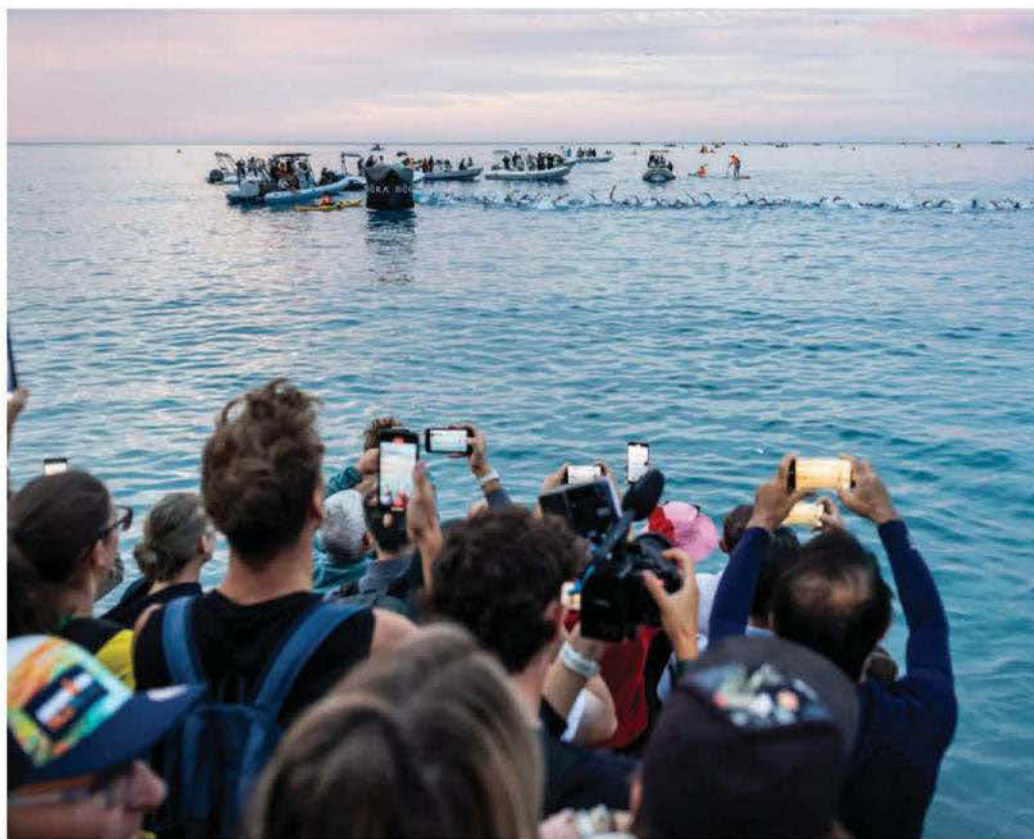


▲ Friends, family and onlookers fill the Promenade des Anglais, Nice, France, for the start of the 2025 Ironman World Championship men's race. Some 2,500 (including 59 pros) athletes competed in this year's champs – up from the 2,200 who raced the men's Worlds here in 2023 – and represented 86 countries, regions and territories.

◀ Sam Laidlow (FRA) stretches out in T1 after cramping in both hip flexors during the swim leg, which even saw him doing backstroke at one point. "I couldn't wait to get out of the water to be honest," he admitted at the line. The 2025 Roth and IM Leeds winner would finish fifth thanks in large part to a race-best, 4:29:29, 180km bike split.

► The pro men are closely monitored from all angles during the 3.8km swim leg. Two-time triathlon Olympian Andrea Salvisberg (SUI) would be the first to hit T1 after clocking the fastest-ever Ironman world championship pro swim time of 45:11mins.

► The 2024 world champion Patrick Lange (GER) shoots out of T1 after a "solid swim". On his Instagram, he continued: "struggled a lot on the bike, but ran myself back with a 2:31h marathon". In fact, he would run his way into ninth place up from 27th at the end of the bike.

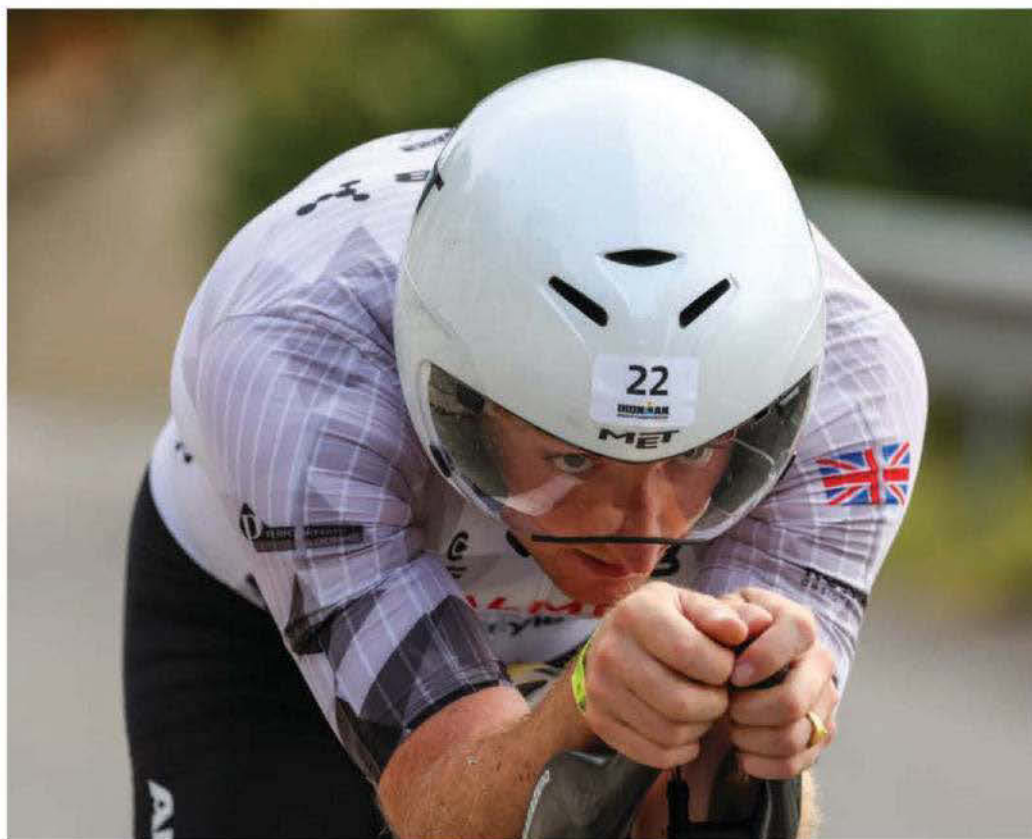




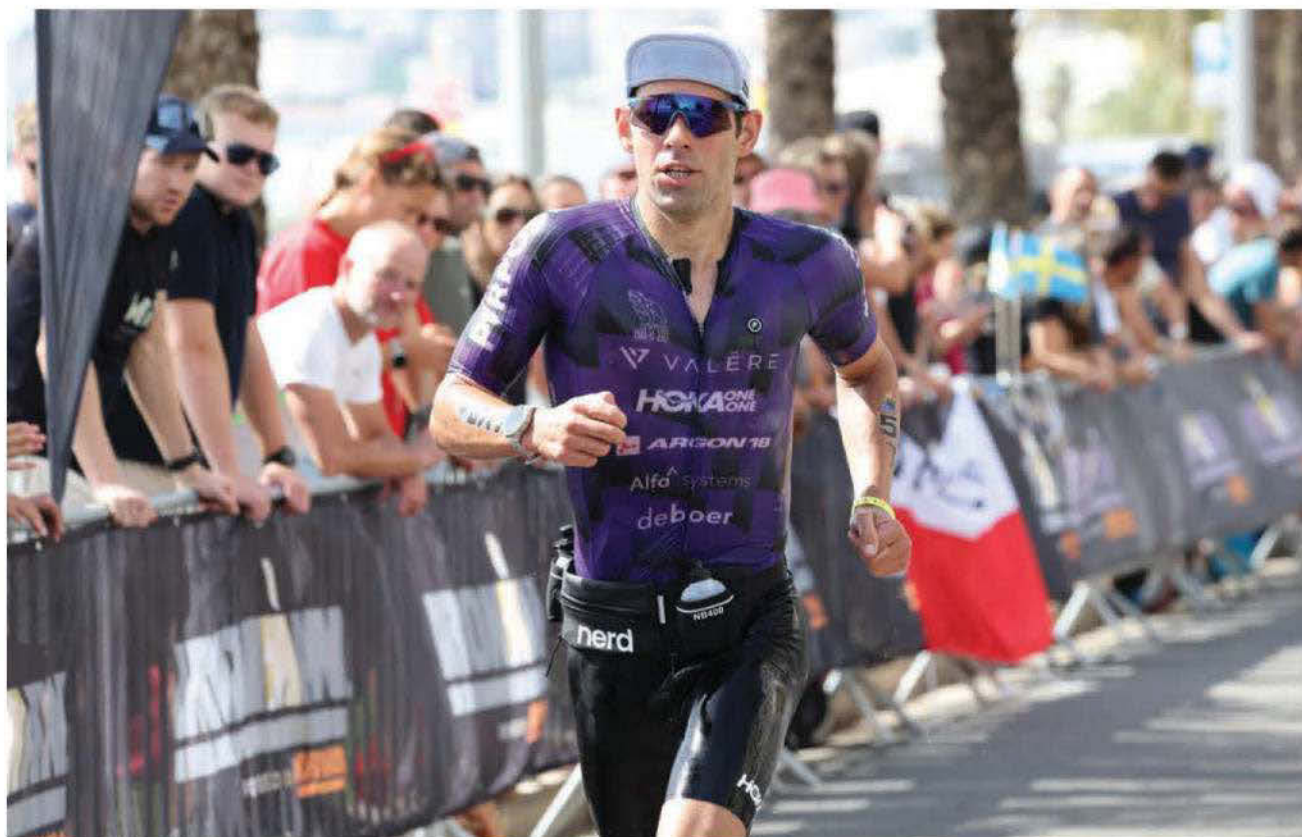
▲ Following a third-place finish in 2023 and a second in 2024, Denmark's Magnus Ditlev had been hoping to complete the World Champs set in 2025. Illness in the lead-up week would derail the Great Dane's day, however, and see him clock his first-ever DNF after pulling out mid-marathon.

◀ Belgium's Marten Van Riel en route to finishing fourth at his Ironman Worlds' debut. "Very proud of the way I raced," he would post on Instagram. "[...] unfortunately the chasers caught me in the last kilometers of the bike and I knew it was going to be a difficult day on the run. A 4th is obviously painful and I want more, but the Norwegian train was too fast."

► “Professional sport is brutal” The words of GB’s Harry Palmer, who was the last of the pro finishers in 40th place. “I had a great swim, pushed hard on the bike [...] and then on the run the lights went out hard. [...] The level of the sport has been elevated so much. It’s kinda scary but also super motivating. [...] I’ll be back.”



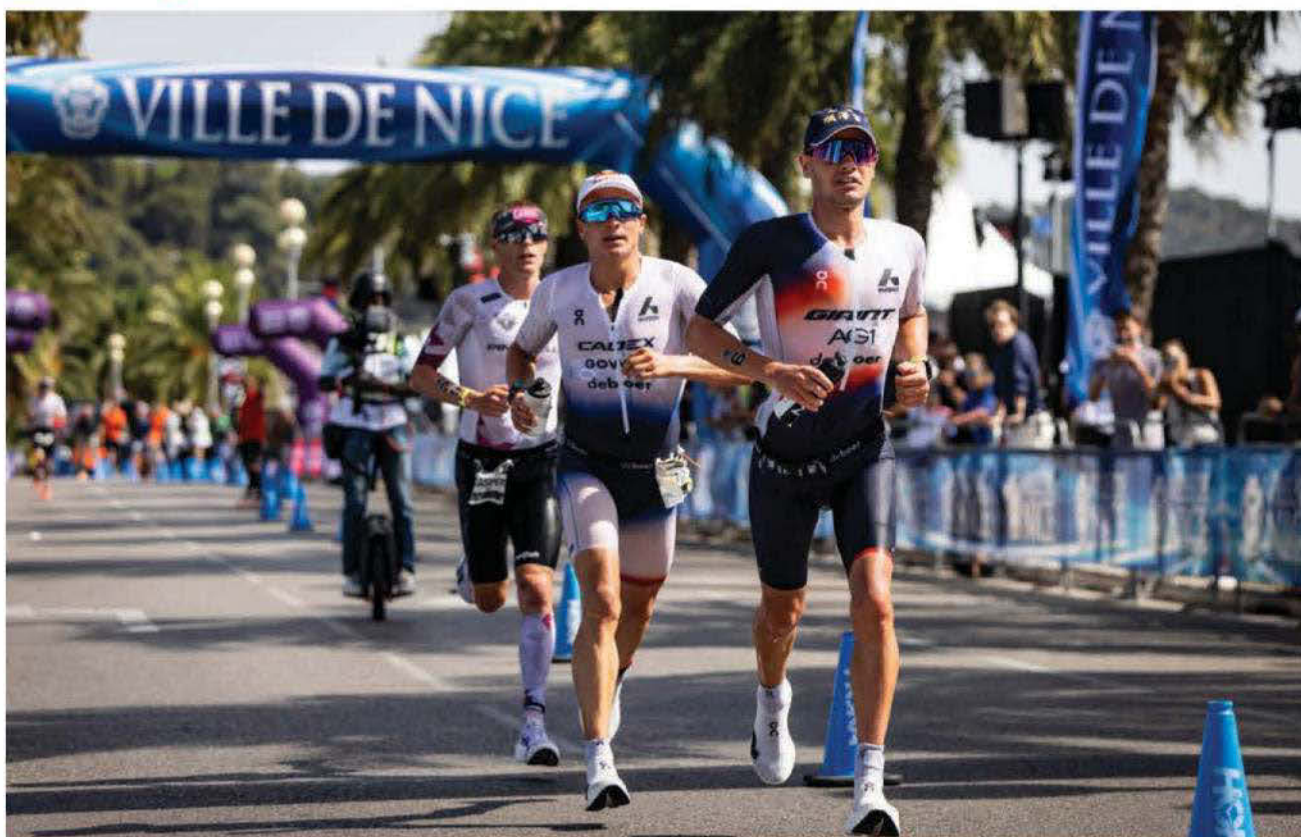
▼ GB’s Joe Skipper would finish top Brit in 26th place. “It was just really hard on the bike – flat out and hang on for as long as you can,” he told 220 at the line. “I blew up a bit and then just tried to recover and the marathon was just tough with the wind. It was just a really hard day.”







◀ The 180km, one-loop bike course in Nice is considered one of the most challenging and spectacular on the Ironman circuit, featuring 2,427m of elevation gain from the Mediterranean Sea into the Alpes-Maritimes and back. The course will remain on the calendar as part of Ironman France, but next year's World Champs will return to Kona, Hawaii, for both the men's and women's races.



▲ Gustav Iden and Kristain Blummenfelt had led from the start of the marathon, both clocking sub-2:30hr pace for the first half. But by the start of the third lap of four, their compatriot Caspar Stornes was back in the mix and sniffing victory.

◀ Stornes congratulates Iden as he crosses the line in second place with a time of 7:54:13 (47:14 swim, a 4:30:17 second-fastest bike leg and a 2:32:15 third-best marathon). "It's not the ultimate comeback I dreamed of but I'm still super pleased with how things turned out," the 2022 world champion told 220. "To run 2:32 for my best ever marathon is pretty crazy. I was super afraid of Kristian's kick towards the end so tried to hold a high average pace to tire him out a bit. The tactics were okay, but I don't think any tactics would have beaten Casper today."

► Kristian Blummenfelt finishes in third place in 7:56:36, having just about kept crippling leg cramps at bay, and completes a Norwegian podium clean sweep. "What a day in Nice," says the 2021 world champion on Instagram. "Sweeping the podium at an @ironmantri world championship with your best friends doesn't happen too often! Huge congrats to @casperstornes for his first world title."

▼ Three Norwegians, three friends, three sub-8hr finish times, three world titles, three of the greats. **2021**



FEATURE

THE STATE OF SWIM

RUN

Next year marks the 20th anniversary of ÖTILLÖ launching the sport of swimrun.

But, amidst the celebrations, just how healthy is the sport in the UK?

We gamely venture to the Isles of Scilly to find out ▶

WORDS MATT BAIRD





GRITTY RASCALS

▲ Athletes leave Coniston during one of the Gritty Rascal's UK events.

The seagrass meadow sways beneath my feet, the crystalline waters offering an underwater experience that could be lifted straight from the Caribbean (or the Outer Hebrides). I'm swimming in my trail shoes and exit onto the fine white sands of the Isles of Scilly and continue to run in my wetsuit. It's multisport, but not as I've ever known it. And I'm having a blast.

The 16km Scilly Swimrun has taken me out of my comfort zone, pushed my physical limits and afforded me an incredible eye-popping immersion into the landscape of the Isles of Scilly's main island of St Mary's. Exploration, adventure and endurance feats are all in healthy supply, and all without a puncture or snapped brake cable in sight. I just keep asking myself: why haven't I done this before?

"You've only got to look at these islands to know that they're built for swimrun," says Scilly 60's Wez Swain, who took over the Scilly swimrun events in 2023. "Swimrun events should be happening here as

it's a phenomenal place for the sport. I say that the swimruns here are events rather than races as I don't want people just to solely focus on the need to win or getting the best possible time; it's also about immersing yourself in this amazing environment."

My race has taken me around the perimeter of St Mary's, a course involving seven runs and seven swims over its 16km route, as well as some scrambling, rock climbing, orienteering and snorkelling. After an amphibious journey of over three hours, I've blisters on top of blisters, to go with chafing in places I didn't know chafing could exist. These become badges of honour when I return to the mainland via the Scillonian ferry a fully paid-up member of the swimrun cause, however. But just how healthy is the sport itself as it prepares to celebrate a major milestone in 2026? Let's look at swimrun's past, present and possible future to find out...

ORIGIN STORY

Like the birth of Ironman in the 1970s, the origins of swimrun are now engrained in multisport mythology. The sport began as a bet in a pub in the Stockholm Archipelago in 2002 following a debate between Anders

▼ Swedish organiser Ötillö (meaning 'island to island') are the originators of swimrun and still hold a series of events globally.



ANDREAS UVHAGEN / ÖTILLÖ

Malm, Janne Lindberg, and Jesper and Mats Andersson over which pair could reach the island of Sandhamn from Utö the fastest.

The idea of swimrun in Sweden started to gain momentum before adventure racers Michael Lemmel and Mats Skott were invited to become involved and turn it into the first professional and commercial swimrun race. ÖTILLÖ – “ö” meaning island, “till” being to in Swedish – was born in 2006 and would soon become a global series in which pairs-only racing, with athletes often bound by ropes, was the norm.

In contrast to the existing, often pool-based swim-followed-by-a-run aquathlon format, swimrun's distances from the beginning were less standardised

“Swimrun is invariably on trails and in the open water without transitions”

and involved multiple swim and run disciplines in each race, invariably on trails and in the open water and without transitions. There was also the unique, anything-goes kit aspect to swimrun that felt like a throwback to triathlon's formative and maverick years in the 1980s especially. Catch paddles, buoyant calf guards and pull buoys were – and continue to be – common sights on the course, while racers have been known to drill holes in their shoes for better post-swim drainage and fashion DIY swimrun suits. Eyeing an opportunity, established triathlon brands released lines of swimrun suits, while swimrun shoes also became a thing.

ÖTILLÖ would become the Ironman of swimrun, intrinsically tied to the sport and its growth, as well as the host of the sport's most storied race, the annual Swimrun World Championships in the Stockholm Archipelago. Like Scilly, that island paradise is ideal for swimrun's island-to-island format, yet the sport has also witnessed growth away from archipelagos, including in France, Switzerland and the USA.

“I first took part in a swimrun in 2015 in Loch Lomond,” says Chloe Rafferty, who launched Love SwimRun Events a year later. “It was different, combined two of my favourite sports and didn't

▼ Hand paddles are a common sight in swimrun, unlike in more traditional multisport formats.



LOVE SWIMRUN

have many rules. There was very little swimrun-specific kit available so you had to make your own! Swimrun seemed more like an adventure or a journey than a race, and it was often in some pretty spectacular locations.”

That’s not to say the sport hasn’t suffered bumps in the road during its growth. Event organisers Breca, who hosted swimruns in the UK and New Zealand, went into receivership, while the UK has witnessed a host of cancelled races for a variety of reasons in 2025, including the weather, water conditions and low entry numbers.

“We’re finding that people are entering events very late, which we cannot cope with financially or in terms of time it takes to put on an event,” says Jude Palmer of Run Surrey Hills, an experienced swimrunner and

“I don’t think the overall swimrun numbers are growing nationwide. People feel self-conscious running around in a wetsuit.”

coach who also organises the South East Swimrun Series. “People seem to be very drawn to ‘landmark’ type events with the bigger brands rather than smaller one offs. And those small numbers mean we don’t have the budget to invest in lots of marketing.”

Wez Swain has seen strong year-on-year growth with his Scilly swimrun events, albeit from relatively low base numbers, with the races also benefiting from the backing of the Visit Isles of Scilly tourist board. “I don’t think the overall swimrun numbers are really growing nationwide. I think the biggest barrier could be people feeling self-conscious about running around in a wetsuit and worrying if people think it’s a fancy dress thing. But then, every now and again, someone like yourself comes along and loves it.”

Given the thrills I’ve experienced in Scilly, it’s easy to see how swimrun could provide an entry point to



PIERRE MANGEZ / OTILLO

Otillo rules state you must stay within 10 metres of your partner, but can use a tether.

The more maverick nature of swimrun allows tow floats, buoyant calf guards and even tow floats, paddles and fins.



MICKAËL MALAPER / GRITTY RASCALS





Swimrun allows athletes to adventure and explore like no other form of multisport.



▲ Our man Matt (top with his two sons) took part in swimrun on the Isles of Scilly.

multisport for trail runners and open-water swimmers of all ages. There's also the fiscal benefit of omitting the most expensive discipline in a triathlon, as well of dispensing with the logistical issues of travelling with a bike. Not that triathlon, with its televised spectacles and the continued power of the Ironman and Olympic Games brands, is in danger of losing its crown as the ruler of the multisport roost.

PAIR PLAY

The chief reason for my own initial reluctance to race a swimrun was the pairs-only aspect that has been with the sport since its formative years. As a triathlete with a woeful DNS record (thanks, gouty ankles), the thought of letting down someone else as well as myself has put me off entering, as much as I once loved and now miss team sport camaraderie. It's a point picked up on by Rafferty.

"When I first started swimrun, all the events had epic distances and you had to be a team of two. This was difficult for me as I didn't know many people that were keen to take on the challenge. That's the reason I started Love SwimRun Llanberis – to offer an accessible distance event with the option of solo entries. I got a lot of slack for it at the time! These days it's much easier to get into swimrun as there's so much kit available, loads of information online, events that ▶

TOP UK SWIMRUNS

FIVE THRILLING SWIMRUNS SET FOR 2026

GREAT NORTH SWIMRUN

13 JUNE 2026

Both short (12.6km) and standard (23.9km) distances are available at one of Britain's biggest swimrun showcases in the Lake District. greatswim.org/swimrun

STUDLAND SWIMRUN

13 JUNE 2026

Another biggie, this time in Studland in Dorset, with short (8.4km), middle (11km) and long (22.4km) courses starting on Knoll Beach. iswimrun.com

SCILLY SWIMRUN

9-12 JULY; 27-28 AUGUST 2026

Swimrun returns to Scilly in 2026 with two major weeks of racing in both July and August, including a new 20km Northern Traverse event. scilly60.co.uk

THE ELIMINATOR DATES TBA

These unique and beginner-friendly swimrun events in Liverpool and Aberdyfi, Wales, offer an eliminator format where the time to complete each lap reduces as the race goes on. weswimrun.org

SWIMRUN GOWER

JUNE 2026

Full (41km), Gritty (20.7km) and sprint (11.7km) courses are available at this Gower-set corker in South Wales, with the peninsula's beautiful coast traversed on all of the routes. grittyrascals.com

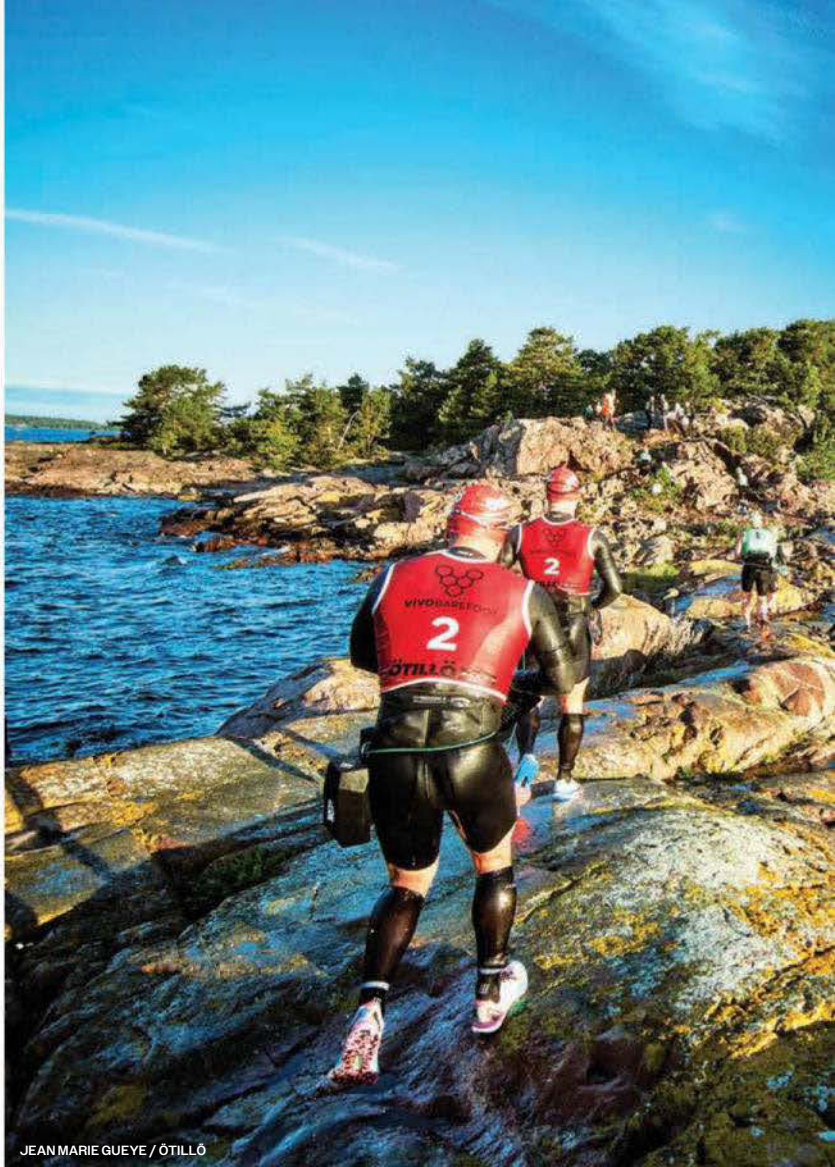
offer short distances and solo entry options. I just don't know why swimrun isn't more popular."

Swimrun organisers, including ÖTILLÖ, have followed Love SwimRun's lead by offering both solo spots and pair options at their races, even if it goes against the swimrun manifesto set in Sweden in the noughties. "The solo category was about bringing down an entry barrier," says Dominik Leu of ÖTILLÖ, who host a wealth of races on both sides of the Atlantic. "We've seen quite a few racers who started swimrun as solo racers and then, often during a race, finding someone who was moving along at a similar speed and then they teamed up for the next event."

Nonetheless, experienced swimrunners still maintain that embracing swimrun as a pair helps maximise the enjoyment of the sport. "The general understanding at ÖTILLÖ is that swimrun is supposed to be practiced as a team," adds Leu. "It's more fun and part of the challenge, and the number of solo participants across our races is generally smaller than the number of people participating as teams."

ÖTILLÖ are also lending their name to Merit races from independent organisers in a bid to grow the sport, with points on offer for their Swimrun Ranking System, including Gritty Rascal Events' Swimrun Gower and Coniston in the UK. The organiser of those events, Gary Pavitt, has revived the former Breca events under a new brand and is seeing signs of an uplift.

"Gritty Rascal Events has doubled entries at Swimrun Gower in its second year and we're up by around 15% at Swimrun Coniston, which will almost certainly be in the top three by participation in the UK."



JEAN MARIE GUEYE / ÖTILLÖ

KIT PICKS

THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL KIT OF SWIMRUN

ZONE3 VERSA

£219

Whether you fashion your own or buy a designated suit, a swimrun wetsuit should keep you warm in the water and not be too cumbersome on the run. The front zipper helps with accessing supplies, too, as well as offering some ventilation on the run legs. Zone3.com



ORCA SWIMRUN PULL BUOY

£49

Catch panels and pull buoys are legal in swimrun racing and, while not cheap, this swimrun-specific pool buoy should help you maintain a decent position in the water and save your legs for the multiple run legs. orca.com

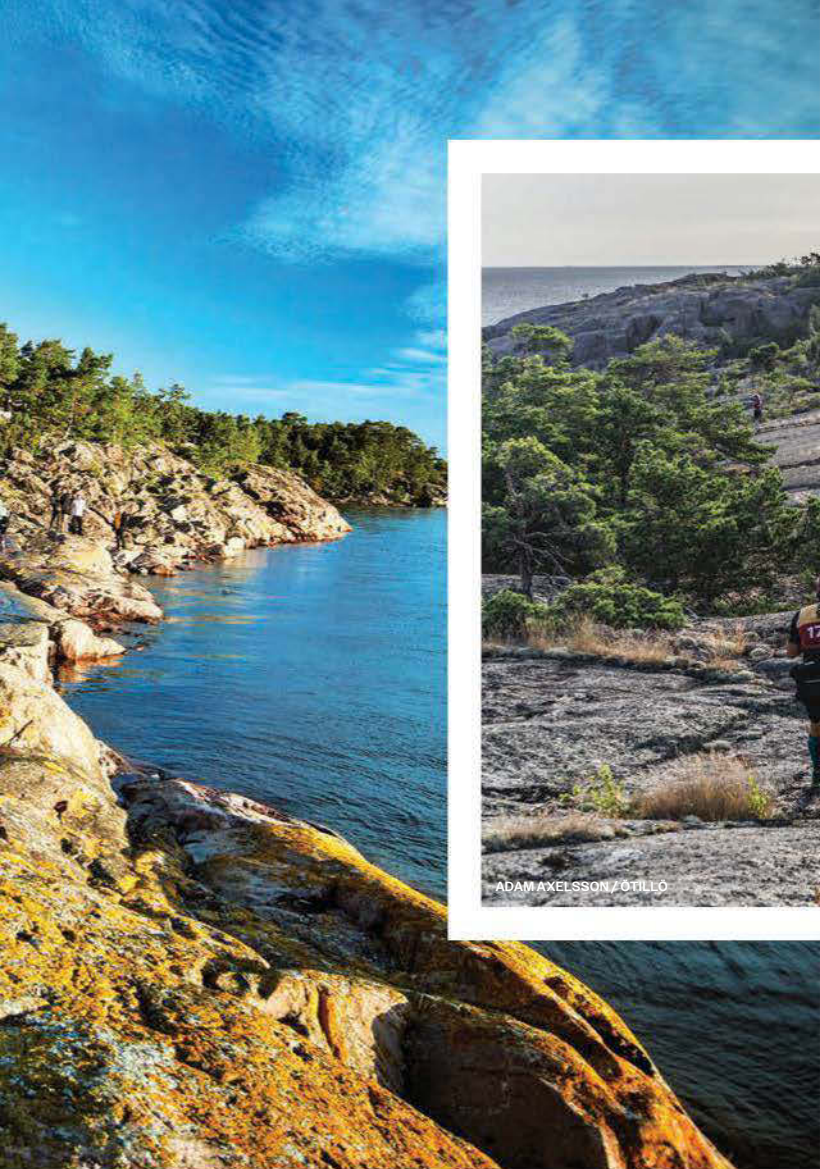


YONDA NEOPRENE CALF GUARDS

£29

Again, ultra buoyant calf guards are legal in swimrun, and should help you regain the buoyancy you've lost due to the lack of neoprene on your lower legs and trainers on your feet. These 5mm numbers should offer added warmth and compression, too. yondasports.com





ADAM AXELSSON / OTILLO

“It’s not an expensive sport to get into as you don’t need a bike and you don’t even need a wetsuit for some.”

▲ Flowing with nature is a key part of swimrun, the lack of bike opening up wilder venues.

If events are marketed well then they seem to attract quite a few people, like the I SwimRun event in Dorset and Windermere’s Great North Swimrun. I can see a trend where more people are doing shorter races over the longer ones. It’s not an expensive sport to get into as you don’t need a bike and you don’t even need a wetsuit for some of the experience races.”

Pavitt is also one of the driving forces behind British Swimrun, a new organisation aiming to promote the sport in the UK. “I first came into swimrun and saw a loose collection of disparate race organisers doing their own thing, especially after the demise of Breca, which was arguably Britain’s biggest swimrun organiser. There was nothing even approaching a national governing body, so I spoke to some of the other event organisers and decided it was time to collaborate more to mature swimrun in the UK.”

British Swimrun have also created a rankings system for swimrunners and a platform for swimrun organisers to help promote their events. “The overall aim of British Swimrun is to promote and develop

swimrun across the British Isles, with the intention to be the national governing body of swimrun,” adds Pavitt. “It’s about supporting the event organisers and athletes and growing the visibility of the sport, enhancing safety standards, yet retaining that free-spirited and adventurous swimrun culture. Longer term, we’d like to support coaching, taster sessions and elite athletes.”

Pavitt has seen a similar approach reap the rewards in France under the Fédération Française de Triathlon, and swimrun is flourishing across the channel. And with the passion displayed by Pavitt, Rafferty, Swain and more that I’ve spoken to in the UK, the will is there for swimrun to exist as a thriving niche of triathlon, offering a fresh challenge to both newcomers and those of us searching for fresh multisport avenues over personal bests.

As for inspiration for your own swimrun journey, I’ll leave you in the experienced hands of Rafferty. “Just do it! There’s now buckets of free information online to help you with kit choices and training tips. It’s a great sport and, once you get your head around running in your wetsuit and swimming in your trainers, you’ll experience a real sense of freedom and adventure.” 

▼ The Scilly Isles lend themselves perfectly to swimrun racing.



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KIT ZONE

THE LATEST GEAR - TESTED BY EXPERTS



MEET THE TEST TEAM



HELEN WEBSTER

220's editor is also a qualified open-water swimming coach.



ROB SLADE

220's resident adventure seeker and former staffer.



EDWARD PICKERING

Cycling author, also races run distances from mile to marathon.



JAMES WITTS

Sports scientist and author of multiple sports book.



SARAH BROADLEY

Keen endurance athlete and open-water swim coach.

OUR RATINGS



0-49%

POOR
SIMPLY PUT,
DON'T BOTHER!



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IT'LL DO THE JOB
WELL ENOUGH



70-79%

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A DECENT
PERFORMER



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ONE OF THE BEST
YOU CAN BUY



90+%

BUY NOW
A GENUINE
CLASS LEADER

*“It felt like the shoes
were almost flinging
me forward”*



ASICS MEGABLAST

£210 ★★★★★



Megablast is an apt name for Asics' new training and workout shoe, because that's exactly what I had from the very first steps. They're fast and light, but even more importantly, the predominant sensation of running in the Megablast is one of fun. They're so bouncy that my internal monologue through my runs wearing them was: "Boing, boing, boing..."

I adopted these shoes late in a marathon training phase, in which most of my runs had been done wearing a pair of functional, durable Asics GT2000s, and the long runs especially were starting to get a bit ploddy. However, the Megablast put a spring back into my stride – the FF Turbo Squared midsole is a bouncy foam that delivers a lot of energy return, which is combined with a 45mm stack at the heel and an 8mm drop to the front of the foot. The 'propulsive' feel that the drop and bounce adds was especially

noticeable running downhill, where it felt like the shoes were almost flinging me forward, but they feel fast on the flat as well.

Weight has been saved with the breathable woven upper, where it feels like there's no excess material at all, and the lightweight tongue, which has minimal padding, but wraps around the foot comfortably. Asics have done a good job with making the structure look like an integral part of the aesthetic – the best design is where form and function are the same thing. I loved the 'serrated' laces, which add extra confidence in the knotting, while the Megablast currently comes in two colourways: white/Piedmont grey, and the Edo purple/black that I wore (and which I liked very much, though it's going to clash with my club's yellow colours).

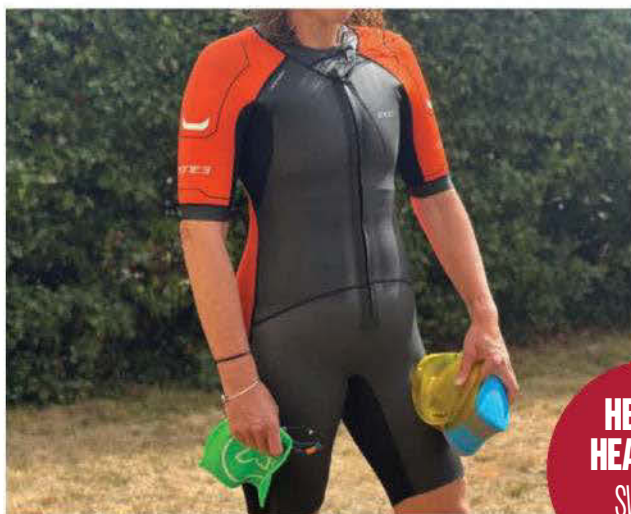
One thing to be careful of: my feet are slightly wide and I felt a bit of pressure and chafing on my little toe – these might not suit those with wider feet, but I was

just about fine.

I did a 15-miler in the Megablasts towards the mid-to-top end of zone 2 a week after doing a similar run in my old trainers, and the difference was tangible and measurable: a significantly lower pulse for much the same effort, livelier legs, faster splits and a feeling that I could have kept going for a long time yet – a result of that bounce and comfort. Asics have marketed the Megablast as an all-round training shoe, but you could easily race in these, and given the cost, I would probably save these for fast training runs where the workout is a significant one in your plan, and 'B' races or races you're using for training. But if you want to put some fun back into your running, you'll have a blast in the Megablast. **EP** asics.com



VERDICT Fast all-rounder for effective training and racing, and most of all, great fun.



HEAD TO HEAD TEST

SWIMRUN WETSUITS



ZONE 3 Versa

£219 ★★★★★

It can be no easy feat designing a suit that is optimal for both swimming and running since each discipline has some discordant requirements – warmth/coolness and lightweight/buoyant, but Zone 3 have done a good job.

I loved the bright orange shoulders and back – both eye catching and great for visibility. Construction is a 50:50 ratio of Yulex Natural Rubber and Speedflo neoprene – a balance for swim and run performance. The seams are flatlock stitched and reinforced on the insides at the leg openings for improved comfort. Although the Yulex offers good flexibility, I did find the neoprene a little rigid and it took some wiggling to get it on.

The Versa performs well in the water, offering a good balance of buoyancy and flexibility. There was not excessive flushing through the suit and I maintained a

comfortable temperature. The separate sleeves provided additional warmth if required although they were extremely tight to get on and off.

For shorter runs, the suit performed well, draining quickly and maintaining a comfortable temperature. However on longer runs it did start to chafe around the armpits. It just felt like there was too much neoprene around the armpits and it was too tight to get off the shoulders myself so required assistance.

The suit has great storage options with a large zip pocket on the rear with a fabric tag making it easy to open and close whilst running. Additionally, there are two good sized and useful storage pockets on the inside around the waist. **SB** www.zone3.com



VERDICT Hi-vis for safety and great storage options for kit and snacks.

ORCA AESIR FLEX

£449 ★★★★★

Described as the most elastic wetsuit in their range, the Aesir is certainly supple. It's lightweight, feels premium and really easy to get on and off. When on it's like a second skin. The construction uses Yamamoto and other advanced fabrics to make it really flexible which is perfect for swimrun offering a fabulous fit. It's true to size and when zipped and velcroed at the neck provides a good seal against water.

Orca's swim pedigree shines through in the performance on the swim. With a gentle buoyancy and maximum flexibility there is no stroke compromise and the easy to add sleeves were a welcome addition in the chilly Scilly waters. The suit drains quickly.

On the run, it's super light, offers fabulous flexibility and the easy to remove jacket-top construction makes half removal effortless to maintain

a comfortable temperature. The extra space created by the design makes it quick and easy to get back over the shoulders making transition back at the water's edge simple even whilst clambering over rocks!

The Aesir's clever construction with the more hardwearing fabric on the shorts proved durable. There is no evidence of abrasion from the rock encounters I had and there is no sign of wear on the inner legs after testing and racing. The seams are reinforced in this area which will also help with durability.

My only criticism of the suit is the storage. There is only one internal pocket (on the inside of the back) which although comfortable as the goods sit in the small of your back, doesn't have a zip. **SB** www.orca.com



VERDICT Extremely lightweight offering, but needs storage.

WAHOO ELEMNT BOLT 3

£299.99 ★★★★★

Wahoo launched the Elemnt Bolt 3 at the same time as the Elemnt Roam 3 (see our review at 220tri.com), with the duo sharing a lot of similarities. Most of that comes in the form of software, but there are differences elsewhere. The main one is size. While the Roam 3 has a 2.8in screen, the Bolt 3 has a 2.3in display. That means data isn't as legible if you want a lot of it on the screen. That said, you can zoom in using the side arrow buttons, leaving you with less data, but better legibility. You can also customise pages via the app to only see what you want.

There's no touchscreen here (and gone is the useful LED light strip from the Bolt 2), which feels like a bit of a negative, but the six textured buttons are easy to use while on the move, even if you are wearing all but the thickest of gloves. On-screen

navigation is good and simple to follow, with the colour display and bleep alerts helping. However, the smaller screen means it's harder to quickly glance at your route or mapping while on the move.

Wahoo quotes a battery life of 20 hours, which is doable depending on the settings and features you're using, but if you're using multiple sensors, have full screen brightness, alerts, navigation and so on then it's likely you'll come a little short of this. Other features include the ability to load up structured workouts, the handy Summit feature, which gives you climbing data when ascending, music controls, Strava segments and custom alerts. uk.wahoofitness.com



VERDICT The larger Roam is a better performer, but the Bolt is still handy and £100 cheaper.



ORCA CHANGING MAT ACCESSORY

£20 ★★★★★

You might be wondering how it's possible to write this many words about what on the face of it is quite a basic product, but there's actually plenty to analyse here. The imaginatively named Orca Changing Mat Accessory (at least you know what you're getting!) is designed to give you a perfect space to stand when changing out of your soggy swimming kit and into dry clothes. Chances are, you'll be doing so underneath a changing robe. So, is it good for that? And is there much to differentiate it from its competitors?

First, the basics. The mat is made from 85% polyamide and 15% polyurethane, while it has a diameter of 75cm, which is the same as Zone3's offering, which I've tested previously. It's spacious enough for changing and is a decent size for piling wet kit into. Like the Zone3, there's an elastic cord

running right the way around the outside so you can cinch it in like a bag to keep all your soggy kit contained on the way back to the car. However, there aren't any carry handles like this mat's competitor has, which is a shame.

The other thing to note is that if you leave a sopping wet wetsuit in there, it will leak through the material after a short while, so it's best not to strip off and use the mat as storage for your wet kit on the journey home (the Zone3 works better on this front). One way the Orca does edge the Zone3, though, is the carry bag, which is stitched into this mat so you can't lose it. It's a big bonus in my eyes, and it's easier to put this mat away, too. orca.com



VERDICT A good platform for changing and love the stuff sack, but not a total hit.





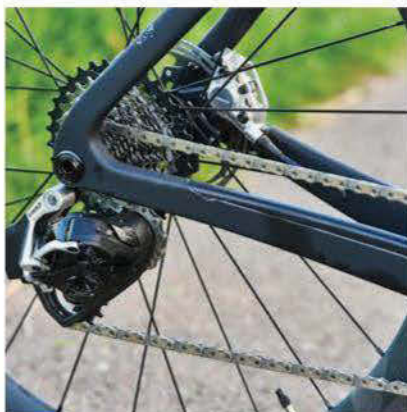
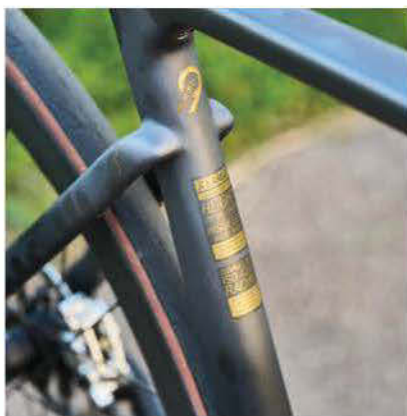
BIKE TEST: ALL-ROUND-APPEAL?

Boardman's updated SLR range promises versatility without compromising speed, delivering premium performance at a price that makes sense for amateur triathletes. Let's see if reality matches the rhetoric... ►

WORDS JAMES WITTS PHOTOS THE SECRET STUDIO



“How do Boardman consistently achieve this monetary witchcraft?”



Four Seasons Fast.’ Chapeau to Boardman’s marketing team whose tagline for the updated range of SLR bikes nicely summarises its intentions of marrying versatility with speed. But is the top-notch publicity team matched by the performance of the top-of-the-range SLR 9, or is it a jack of all trades, master of none?

We’ll find out soon enough. What’s clear is that Boardman’s continued the theme that’s carried them successfully through 18 years since launching their first bikes in July 2007 – namely, value for money. The C10 carbon frame is dressed in premium components that are seen on bikes twice the £5,500 price tag. SRAM’s Red AXS E1 12-speed groupset retails for around £3,000. Zipp’s 404 Firecrest carbon tubeless is around £1400. Throw in the combined value of the saddle, seatpost, bars, tyres and other accoutrements and you’re basically bagging a premium carbon frame for several hundred pounds.

How do Boardman consistently achieve this monetary witchcraft? It’s something we put to the company’s brand communications manager, James Ryan. “As Halfords owns Boardman, it means

we are, in essence, a business-to-customer brand, selling directly to customers through Halfords’ brick-and-mortar proposition, as well as directly online via halfords.com and [Tredz.com](https://tredz.com) (Tredz is also owned by Halfords). This means we don’t factor a third-party retailer’s margin.

“Combine this with the buying power Halfords has as a cycling manufacturer for their other cycling brands, and we have significant weight with suppliers to ensure the best possible price. All of which we pass on to the customer.”

The final part of the fiscally prudent equation is that Boardman don’t invest in high-profile team sponsorship. This is something I recall speaking about to Chris Boardman many moons ago. The 1992 Olympic gold medallist, once star of ITV’s Tour coverage and now national active travel commissioner, said that it’d cost several million pounds to do so. That’s in cash and doesn’t include the bikes. It’s also not a great PR hit if you then withdraw sponsorship down the line.

“Yeah, it’s definitely a double-edged sword, as it’s a trusted way to get your product in front of key audiences,” says Ryan. “On the other hand, someone has to

pay for that investment and, ultimately, it's reflected in the cost of the product." So, Tadej and Remco's loss is the amateur triathlete's fiscal gain. But enough about the value on paper, let's see how it performs on the road...

LIGHTWEIGHT, STRONG FOUNDATIONS

We've shone a brief light on the premium componentry, but that's arguably to do a disservice to the frame, which is Boardman's top-end C10. It also provides the foundation for the £3,500 SLR 9.6 and £2,500 SLR 9.2, while the SLR 9.0 (£1,800), and SLR 8.9 men's and women's (both £1,400), use the C7. As ever, the main difference between the two options comes down to weight and strength.

"C7 typically comprises Toray T700 fibres or equivalent, with a lay-up that optimises the tensile strength and modulus properties of the material to achieve the desired combination of weight, stiffness, impact resistance, compliance and comfort," Ryan explains. "C10 is primarily composed of Toray T800 or equivalent, which on its own has approximately 12% higher tensile strength and 28% higher modulus than its C7 counterpart. Plus, C10 also features a higher grade mixed into certain areas, resulting in a further 16% increase in

tensile strength. The addition of higher-grade fibres to specific areas of the frame enables us to add incremental stiffness and strength, while also reducing overall weight."

It's one reason why the SLR 9.8 hits the scales at around 8kg compared to the 8.9's mooted 9.4kg. That's not up there with pure lightweights like Specialized's Aethos Pro, which comes in under 7kg. But the Aethos is heavily skewed to climbers, jettisoning aerodynamic tubing to save weight.

While SLR 9.8 is 'Four Seasons Fast', that doesn't mean it comprises on speed. Far from it, as this is one lively bike, reacting swiftly to changes in torque and holding pace (in fact, increasing it) superbly on the flat. In fact, for a bike pitched as taking you from winter rides to summer races, I was surprised just how lovely it felt.

QUICKER THAN ITS PREDECESSOR

According to Boardman, it's just under six watts faster than the previous SLR across the full yaw sweep of -15 to +15°. That's at 50km/hr. This drag saving is down to a tweaked aerodynamic tubing profile that's the result of partnering with the Silverstone Sports Engineering Hub and Catesby Projects. (Co-incidentally, the ►



Carbon Zipp wheels with Boardman tyres.

BOARDMAN SLR 9.8

SPECS

Weight 9.75kg (L)
Frame Boardman C10 Carbon
Fork Boardman C10 Carbon
Gears SRAM Red AXS E1 12-speed
Brakes SRAM Red AXS E1 hydraulic
Wheels Zipp 404 Firecrest Carbon Tubeless
Finishing kit Goodyear Eagle F1 R
Tyre Boardman Aero Alloy
Handlebar Boardman SLR ICR
Stem Boardman Two-Position Aero D-Shaped Carbon
Saddle Prologo Scratch M5 Pax Tirox

HIGHS

Incredible value for money. Fast and comfortable.

LOWS

That hidden – and, at times, ineffective – seatpost clamp.

PRICE

£5,500





“A nifty feature are the ‘bonus buttons’ on the hoods”

SRAM 12-speed gears fitted as standard.



brains behind both is aerodynamic experts TotalSim and its founder Dr Rob Lewis. Alongside Chris Boardman, Lewis was one of the founding members of the so-called ‘Secret Squirrel’, whose innovations led to an Olympic gold rush for Team GB’s track cyclists.)

“Their involvement meant that we could rapidly design and computer-test frame iterations, utilising their scanning, CAD [Compute-Aided Design], FEA [Finite Element Analysis] and CFD [Computational Fluid Dynamics] capabilities,” says Ryan. “Once we had prototype frames, we returned to them to take advantage of the Silverstone wind tunnel to further aerodynamically test and refine the frame.”

Its speed doesn’t come at the expense of comfort. For that, a great deal of credit must not only go to the C10 carbon and the excellent Prologo Scratch saddle, but also the Goodyear Eagle F1 tubeless-ready tyres. Their 30mm width adds comfort without dulling the ride. Both frame and fork actually have generous tyre clearances of up to 36mm, signalling the bike’s dual purpose of performing at both races and in training, even commutes.

Again signalling its all-year-round

intent, that tyre clearance shrinks to 32mm if you take advantage of the mudguard mounts. If you do, note that Boardman has worked closely with Kinesis to offer a dedicated mudguard called ‘Fend Off’. They’re made from aluminium, come in 40 and 50mm widths, and prices start from £40.

That user-friendliness extends to the bottle-cage mounts, of which there are three – the standard offerings on the downtube and seattube, plus a set of bosses beneath the downtube. It’s a set-up more commonly seen on gravel and adventure and is a boon to those who prefer stashing their inner tubes and Allen keys away in a tool can rather than a saddle bag. In theory, adding that weight lower is also better for the bike’s balance.

SUPERB SHIFTING

While those extra bosses highlights the SLR 9.8’s practicality, that SRAM Red AXS 12-speed electronic groupset is all about luxury. This wireless wonder is brilliant and right up there with Shimano’s Dura-Ace Di2. Shifting is precise and reliable, no matter what the weather. (For the unfamiliar, the right shifter shifts you up the gears; the left down the gears; and

FOR A LITTLE LESS...

The Boardman SLR 9.6 will set you back £3,500. It features the same C10 carbon as the SLR 9.8 but is armed with Shimano Ultegra Di2. Wheels are Zipp's 303 carbon tubeless.

FOR A LOT LESS...

Boardman's SLR 8.9 is yours for £1,400. The C7 carbon frame hosts Shimano Tiagra's 10-speed groupset, while the wheels are Boardman's own RD alloys.

both at the same time nudges the chain up or down the front chainring.)

A nifty feature that's also seen on Shimano are the 'bonus buttons' on the hoods. These customisable buttons can be used for shifting, scrolling through the screen of your head unit and even activating certain computer functions. They're a really rather clever addition, though just note that they are there as they're subtle so can be easily overlooked for your first few riders (as per our test dummy!). This customisation takes place in SRAM's usable AXS app.

The rechargeable batteries are lightweight, last an age and very easy to change. We know from past experience that you can consistently rack up around 1,000km per charge, plus you can swap batteries between derailleurs if you ever get caught short.

Its braking performance is arguably even stronger than its ability to project you forward. Impressive modulation and an effortless but still assured lever action results in an incredible braking experience, which was appreciated down the vertiginous Cheddar Gorge on my test route. Counter-intuitively, this ability to brake with such minimal effort results in more speed, as it cranks up cornering confidence, leading to a faster entry and exit.

If we're nitpicking – and for completeness – we'd swap out the SRAM Force cassette and chain for SRAM Red alternatives, but you really can't grumble on such a value-packed bike.

The SLR 9.8 handles with confidence, too. That's helped by the Zipp's 404 Firecrest carbon tubeless that are famously stable in crosswinds. The 58mm-deep rim is aerodynamically focused but not to the extreme of 80mm-plus. That helps. As does the Firecrest

shaping that's designed to slash side-force tugging, plus smooth out airflow. The wide rim and blunt nose profile reduce steering torque when caught by cross-winds, too.

Our only caveat is that while this bike's mantra, 'Four Seasons Fast', is true, the more conservative amongst you might want to swap these out for a shallower rim offering during the windier autumnal and wintry months.

AIMED AT AMATEURS

As for the rest of the bike, there are several other areas where we appreciate its real-world appeal and really hammers home that this is a bike designed for amateur athletes, not professionals, which can so often be the case if a bike brand does have a contract with a WorldTour cycling team.

Take the two-piece bar and stem. Nothing transformative there, of course, but by eschewing aerodynamic handlebars, you can not only seamlessly change to a wider or narrower bar depending on your size and riding style, but you can clamp in your bike computer without the expense of buying an extra attachment.

You can also clamp on a set of clip-on aerobars when preparing for – and taking part in – races. Doing so naturally steers your geometry into a more stretched-out aerodynamic position. In itself, that can sometimes cause discomfort as you're in a position the bike wasn't naturally designed for. However, this is somewhat helped by Boardman's own seatpost that offers both inline and 15mm layback options. Nifty.

What isn't nifty is the seatpost clamp, which is hidden between where the top tube meets the seat tube. That's not the problem. The problem is its capacity to clamp effectively. Several times when putting the torque down, as per climbing or racing my equally middle-aged mates, the seatpost began to sink into the frame. Only a nudge. Or two. But clearly enough to disrupt the rhythm and the ride. Dismount and tightening followed, albeit you clearly have to be careful with overtightening within a carbon frame.

My hidden seatpost-clamp complaints aren't reserved for the SLR 9.8 – I've experienced it elsewhere and it's resolved by purchasing carbon gripper paste – but for the life of me I don't know why



The frame is Boardman's C10 carbon.



The saddle is Prologo's Scratch M5.



SRAM discs take care of braking.

manufacturers don't stick with the traditional but, in my eyes, best design of a normal seatpost clamp.

Still, I wouldn't let a £5 additional paste purchase cloud your judgment. This is a brilliant bike that proves top-tier performance doesn't have to come with a five-figure price tag. Its balance of comfort, practicality and outright speed makes it one of the most compelling choices for amateur triathletes who are seeking that one bike that sees them throughout the seasons. **88%**



VERDICT Impressively versatile and value-saturated bike that excels in many areas for year-round riding.



GROUP TEST:

MULTISPORT
WATCHES

Swim, bike, run, sync... In the world of multisport watches tech just keeps advancing. Here are reviews of the six newest to market suitable for tri training and racing.

WORDS JAMES WITTS

The old joke seen on many t-shirts at race registration “if I pass out, pause my Garmin” speaks to the importance many athletes place upon their training and race stats (not to mention the dominance of a certain watch brand). In recent years though, the high-end sports watch market has exploded with most of the major brands offering several options for those who want to track everything from their run pace to their sleep, heart rate to swim stroke rate.

If you head to 22otriathlon.com you'll find a group test of the best watches out there for multisporters, but with so many new ones hitting the market lately, over the next few pages we've concentrated our energies on six new ones you may not have seen before. Encompassing Polar, Suunto, Coros, Amazfit, Huawei and Garmin, there are options for all styles and budgets.

Before you buy though, it's worth having a good think about what you need your watch for. Those targeting iron-distance or beyond, or ultras of any nature (be it running, cycling or swimming) will need to prioritise elements such as battery life, accuracy of GPS and – if you like to go into the wilds – how robust the watch is.

There's so much more to consider now though with a myriad of health tracking available as well as whistles and bells such as voice prompts, AMOLED screens, flashlights and virtual coaching ability. Our advice? Nail down what you really want and use that as your starting point – otherwise you could end up paying for a load of features you don't actually want or need. That said though, there's a part of all of us that loves a gadget, so if that's you, go wild!

Head over the page for our full reviews of the six latest multisport watches... ►



GARMIN FORERUNNER 970 £629.99



garmin.com

I'm of a vintage to remember when Garmin launched its first Forerunner, the 101, in 2003. It was transformative and arguably laid the foundations for where sports watches are today. Garmin continues to innovate but, 22 years later, those advancements are baby steps compared to the giant leap of 2003.

That brings us to the FR970, which is the successor to the FR965 and features a number of upgrades, albeit are they enough to justify the price, which is £130 more than the FR965 on launch?

One of the advancements is the Gen5 optical heart-rate sensor that proved impressively accurate. That was both for performance and health, as it also means you can now tap into its ECG capabilities. Simply switch into ECG mode, squeeze the outer ring of the bezel with your thumb and index finger,

wait 30secs and voila – a brief summary of your health. And I'm pleased to say I wasn't having a heart attack.

The 35mm AMOLED screen is more vivid than before, which really comes into its own with the excellent built-in turn-by-turn navigation and offline mapping. The downside is that this extra clarity comes at a cost to battery life. To extend it, you can do the usual of turning off seeing the display all of the time, though I'm a fan of seeing the time whenever I wish without contorting my wrist.

Where the extra illumination is more appreciated is the flashlight that's seen in the Forerunner range for the first time after lighting up recent Fenix and Instinct models. It's strong – similar to a smartphone – and timely with winter trail runs on the horizon. It also features strobe and red settings if the need arises.

The Garmin Triathlon Coach is brilliant. Via the usable Connect IQ app, you select your race, choose which days you want to train including your swim

days, then Garmin will prescribe daily, workouts across the three disciplines up to your goal race. These workouts should progress and adapt based on your recent training history. On race day, then gives you pace- and course-specific guidance to (hopefully) reach your goals.

The FR 970 also introduces a running economy feature that measures the efficiency of your stride, including the speed lost each time your foot strikes the ground. That's an incredible amount of detail that is really for the 0.1%. It also requires Garmin's latest HRM 600 strap, which retails for £150, bumping up this package to nearly £800.

There's an added speaker and microphone, so you can answer calls but you'll need your phone with you. The speaker offers voice command for things like opening apps. Some will find useful; some will feel it's not needed.



VERDICT Superb multisport watch at a pretty hefty price but added features are in the most very useful.



COROS NOMAD £319

uk.coros.com



When is a Casio G-Shock not a Casio G-Shock? When it's a Garmin Instinct. Or when it's the new Coros Nomad, which takes its aesthetics from both, its rugged design screaming, "Outdoor adventure." It's not my style – I prefer slimmer-line models – but it'll float the visual boat for many. The brown colour option here isn't for everyone either, but will blend nicely with outside camo gear if that's your thing as well!

And that group includes anglers, for this watch is heavily marketed at fisher folk. With the Nomad you can tap into tidal data, log catches and learn from previous successful fishing days where to fish. Or, alternatively, where not to fish. That could come in useful for those of you who are as happy netting fish as you are PBs. If not, there's still plenty here to please most triathletes.

That includes offline mapping, which has been borrowed from the Coros Pace Pro and is impressive for this price point. This mapping's been upgraded from previous versions and now incorporates labels on streets and points of interest. It's also much clearer to see when you're exercising on-road and off-road.

The detail's more easily seen than many Coros efforts thanks to the high-contrast Memory-in-Pixel (MIP) display. It's sharp and clear, albeit not to the level of AMOLED screens (which admittedly are improving); that said, it does elevate battery life to 34hrs in full GPS mode and 22 days in daily mode.

Arguably the biggest marketing sell of the Nomad is its adventure journal. This has many threads. Firstly, via the new 'action' button on the lower left-hand side, you can record voice notes straight to your watch. The audio clips stay pinned to the route, so when you transfer the information to the eminently usable Coros app, you can pinpoint exactly where you left said note

during your session. Handy for recaps of training routes.

You can also take photos and videos in the Coros app or upload them from your phone's camera roll. Alongside the voice pins and the saved location feature, you can join the dots on your memorable adventure. It's impressive stuff but will it be used regularly by triathletes? Once the novelty has worn off, I suspect not. But maybe I'm not adventurous enough!

Triathletes will certainly appreciate the accuracy of the GPS and heart-rate data. We were particularly impressed by the open-water swim mode, which proved spot on. The Nomad also features a wealth of health metrics to gauge your recovery.

It's an excellent sports watch but arguably the more svelte Coros Pace Pro will appeal more to multisporters who are after a training tool solely for triathlon. Angling triathletes, though...



VERDICT A rugged-looking watch built for adventurous triathletes but the tools for fishing may not be for all!



AMAZFIT BALANCE 2 £299.90



uk.amazfit.com

For those unfamiliar with Amazfit, they're not the fitness arm of Amazon; instead, Amazfit is the wearable brand of a Chinese company called Zepp Health Corporation. It's why the app that syncs with the Balance 2 is from Zepp. They've been going since 2013 and their strengths lie in an array of features, good value and a long battery life.

You certainly can't argue with the list of features, which goes on forever and includes everything you'd expect of a smartwatch including an app to manage jetlag and a Pomodoro timer to help you focus on the task at hand. For sub-£300, for general users it's impressive. But how does it perform for multisporters?

Firstly, it's highly visible on the fly, be it the swim, bike or run. That's down to a bright 1.5-inch AMOLED touchscreen that's protected by sapphire glass.

Maximum brightness comes in at 2,000 nits, which is the same as the pricier Apple Watch Series 10 and Google Pixel Watch 3. The mix of an aluminium alloy frame and fibre-reinforced polymer looks stylist and should mean a durable construction.

As well as touchscreen, it has a dial akin to Coros' and an extra button that pings to the workout mode by default. There are over 170 sport modes, including swim, bike and run, plus triathlon. Oh, and chess and bridge if you need to monitor your heart rate while leaving your partner in check mate (what will they think of next?!).

The Balance 2 syncs to third-party apps like TrainingPeaks, plus it seamlessly connects to other triathlon regulars like power meters and heart-rate straps via Bluetooth.

Impressively for the price it supports offline and navigation mapping, which feature labels, contour lines and elevation marks. However, you must download the map region on the Zepp app first before syncing. If you're

looking to follow a certain route, however, you'll have to tap into a third-party app like Strava, download the GPX file and import. That's all a little clunky. Unlike the map scrolling, which is impressive and has no lag. The crown's useful for zooming in and out.

You might think all these features come at the expense of accuracy but not so. You can choose from four GPS settings, including the full option, which is multi-band. This proved accurate on the bike and run, and pretty good in open-water swimming. The heart-rate feedback wasn't quite as impressive, especially in early use when it skewed erratically. But it soon settled down. Battery life is an impressive 33hrs in full GPS mode and 21 days in daily use.

It also comes with two straps: red and black which is a nice additional treat in an already competitively-priced watch.



VERDICT A surprisingly impressive watch that will appeal to many and priced well for the package.



HUAWEI WATCH GT 6 PRO £329



consumer.huawei.com/uk

This is the only bonafide smartwatch on test. Which seen through a triathlon lens often means it's a jack of all trades, master of none. Not so with the GT 6 Pro, which Huawei launched in September, where there's a lot to like.

Firstly, the price, which is incredible value for £330. It's also the same price as its predecessor when it hit the market. It doesn't scrimp on quality when it comes to its material composition. The body's forged from titanium alloy, the screen is protected, while the rear is crafted from a polished nanocrystal ceramic. The 46mm AMOLED screen is appreciatively clear. And a rare octagonal bezel completes what we feel is a pretty stylish number.

As you'd expect from a company the size of Huawei, the list of health and performance features is immense, some

of greater worth than others. We'd probably sidestep the Emotional wellbeing app, which tells you how to improve your mood – we know the answer: swim, bike or run – and we'd question how accurate a wristwatch is when it comes to arterial stiffness detection (another of the apps), but they're outliers.

More usefully, the GPS and heart-rate readings are impressive and instilled confidence from the very first stride. And pedal, which is one of the major advancements over the previous model. Huawei's heavily pitching this at cyclists (and triathletes) with the new 'virtual power' feature using 'advanced algorithms' to estimate your power output without the need for a power meter. It's certainly a cost-saving. But at the cost of performance? Maybe as it didn't match my real power meter. You also couldn't do a lot with that information – training by power zones, for instance – but the readings are consistent between rides and is arguably a good first step into cycling by wattage.

It's also Bluetooth so you could simply sync to your real power meter, albeit ideally you view this info on a head unit.

You can swim with this in both the pool and open-water with solid results. We also liked the warm-up guidance – a computer-generated figure to take you through the stretches; impressively, the run metrics include vertical oscillation and ground contact time; and battery time is mighty, coming in at up to 45hrs for GPS mode.

On the downside, when it comes to navigation, you can download the Petal Maps app on your smartphone, but only for Android, which isn't ideal for all.

Finally, the Huawei app is slick – if not a little busy with health sections you won't use – and we particularly appreciated the fun runback of a training session, which you could accompany with music.

78%

VERDICT Insufficient granular detail for experienced triathletes but a still impressive watch for many.



POLAR GRIT X2 £399



polar.com

It's been five years since Polar launched the Grit range, so fair play to the Finnish crew that the Grit X2 is only around £50 more than the original on launch. In a world that's been highly inflated these past few years, that's impressive. The fact it's £250 cheaper than the Grit X2 Pro, with predominantly the same feature set, isn't to be sniffed at, either.

What are the main differences between this and the £650 Pro? In all honesty, it's more about software than hardware. It's smaller, at 45mm compared to 49mm, which is still sizeable enough to sight during exercise and feels plenty big enough, without swamping smaller wrists. Naturally, that means a smaller battery, which means a shorter battery life. But that's not a problem as it still comes in at 30hrs in full GPS and seven days in

smartwatch mode. Its waterproofing's 50m compared to 100m on the Pro but that's still sufficient for triathletes when open-water or pool swimming. Just don't go scuba diving!

Like the majority of watches here, it delivers the majority of features any discerning triathlete would desire, arguably the main one being excellent GPS pick-up. That means you can trust the mapping option, which pings thanks to the AMOLED screen. Like many at this price point, turn-by-turn navigation is available only when you upload routes via a GPX file or third-party apps like Komoot. You don't need to download for the back-to-start mode, however, which is always appreciated if you're running somewhere new. The only minor annoyance carried over from the Pro is that occasionally the map needs calibrating via a jolt of the wrist. It's no biggy but in this high-tech world it does feel a little parochial.

It's packed with Polar's array of smart coaching tools to assess how recovered you are, when you should fuel –

extremely useful on long bikes – and how you've slept. They're all useful to help drive on your triathlon training, as is the VAM feature in the cycling department. This measures the rate at which you climb or descend, taking both vertical and horizontal data into account, and is a good, proven metric to measure your ascent to top-notch climber.

Heart-rate accuracy is middling – it's fine for easy efforts but can be a little jumpy during interviews – and there's a screen torch, which is okay but nowhere near as effective as the Garmin flashlight.

But where the Grit X2 could do with a nudge forward is its user interface and the Flow app itself. Both seem a little dated compared to the clean, smart feel of the Garmin and Amazfit. Hopefully that's in development as both interfaces have been around for many years now.

81%

VERDICT Much better value than the Pro. Fine watch. Just needs a little makeover to make it ideal.



SUUNTO RUN £199



suunto.com

The Suunto Run is a well-priced, slick-looking number whose vibrancy of look not only comes from its fetching yellow colourway, but also its stainless-steel bezel and Gorilla Glass protection. The core of the watch is tough plastic, which doesn't detract from its smart aesthetic. (It also comes in orange, grey and black.) The Velcro strap is also a winner – it's light and comfy – though some will prefer a traditional silicone version.

As for its software, there's much here to applaud. The GPS held up well in most conditions, performing impressively on trails runs beneath the canopies of trees. It was fine on the bike, too, and was okay in the open-water but nothing more than that. Although I didn't test it on an athletics track, others report that its track-running mode is a real boon, 'locking' to the lane you're

running for greater distance and pace accuracy on curved surfaces. While the Run lacks topographical maps, you can plan routes on the excellent app and sync them to the watch. That's to be expected beneath the £200 mark.

Similar to the Polar, heart rate can be a little erratic at times but for the most part is reliable. As is the Ghost Runner, a feature whereby you either chase or be chased by your shadow when training at a certain pace or aiming for a set finishing time. It's a cute feature but arguably one you'll use half-a-dozen times at most.

Additional runner-friendly pros include offline music support and Bluetooth headphone support, so you can transfer songs from your computer or phone to the Suunto Run using the USB-C charging cable and stride to your heart's content without carrying your phone. Enabling Auto Laps also gives you voice feedback after each lap, keeping you updated on your performance in real time. It's useful, though borders on irritation after a while.

All of this and its moniker highlight that this is more a run watch than a multisport tool. Despite that, it's pre-loaded with 32 sports including triathlon. It also features advanced swimming features like the SWOLF score, which measures your stroke efficiency. It calculates open-water swim, distance, too. We also appreciate how Suunto offsets the predicted lifetime carbon-dioxide emissions of the Run via a reforestation project in south-east Africa.

It's a fine watch but, though more expensive (£345), we'd guide you to Suunto's impressive Race. Its battery life is higher than the 20hrs seen here (in full GOS mode) and it comprises more advanced multisport metrics to optimise your performance. If running is your main activity and you're on a budget though, this is a fine option. **82%**

78%

VERDICT Superb entry-level watch, though more for runners than triathletes given the features.

ESSENTIAL KIT

All you need to train & race, as rated by our 220 Kit Zone expert testers

TOP-END WETSUITS

If your goal is to exit T1 first, you'll want a suit that strikes the balance between flexibility, buoyancy and comfort, while also being super easy to remove on the fly.



Orca Apex Flex
★★★★★
£589 Soft and flexible; ideal for good swimmers.
Issue 432
orca.com



Yonda Ghost 3
★★★★★
£589 Impressive mix of flexibility and buoyancy.
Issue 417
yondasports.com



Sailfish G-Range 8
★★★★★
£691 Unrivalled freedom and the fastest on test.
Issue 432
sailfish.com



Zone3 Aspire
★★★★★
£549 Buttery-soft and our highest-rated suit.
Issue 444
zone3.com



Zoggs Hypex Ultra FS
★★★★★
£700 Incredibly supple; improved hydrodynamics.
Issue 432
zoggs.com

BUDGET WETSUITS

Always try before you buy as sizes can vary massively between brands. Then consider your swim ability, as some features may be lost on newbies (e.g. thin neoprene and reduced buoyancy).



Van Rysel SD Neoprene
★★★★★
£119.99 A great option for shorter distances.
Issue 406
decathlon.co.uk



Lomo Nuotare
★★★★★
£125 Price, comfort and inclusive sizing combine.
Issue 422
lomo.co.uk



Speedo Proton
★★★★★
£140 A crazy price for a suit that performs so well.
Issue 417
speedo.com



Zone3 Aspect
★★★★★
£179 Performs well and is breaststroke specific.
Issue 429
zone3.com



B70 Fusion
★★★★★
£350 A flexible suit with a great fit and feel.
Issue 444
blueseventy.com

POOL GOGGLES

When shopping for a new pair, consider tint to deal with bright lighting, width of vision and comfort to ensure a fuss-free swim.



Orca Killa Speed
★★★★★
£17 Sleek goggles with a choice of nose bridges.
Issue 427
orca.com



Zoggs Predator
★★★★★
£25 Great price and size range; no leaks or fogging.
Issue 427
zoggs.com



Tri-Fit Rapid-X
★★★★★
£30 Superb visibility; soft and comfy gaskets.
Issue 427
tri-fitathletic.com



Roka R1 Clear
★★★★★
£32 Superb all-round visibility. Great fit, too.
Issue 427
ukroka.com



Zone3 Volare
★★★★★
£35 Great, comfy fit, plus polarised lenses.
Issue 427
zone3.com

OPEN-WATER GOGGLES

Outdoor swimming goggles should ideally have mirrored or polarised lenses for greater clarity. Often the lenses are bigger, too, for greater peripheral vision.



Orca Killa Comfort
★★★★★
£24 Comfortable, great visibility and an impressive price. Good stuff.
Issue 430
orca.com



Zoggs Predator Ultra
★★★★★
£38 A true classic and top performance from the polarized lenses.
Issue 430
zoggs.com



The Magic5 Blue Mirror Gold
★★★★★
£75 Made-to-measure goggles that deliver near perfection.
Issue 430
themagic5.com



Tri-Fit Volt
★★★★★
£35 Superb fit at a good price. The goggles our Editor relies on for races.
Issue 445
tri-fitathletic.com



Form Smart Swim 2
★★★★★
£229 Unique tech that offers real benefits for pool and open water.
Issue 430
formswim.com

COLD-WATER SWIM KIT

Adding neoprene accessories can make your winter swimming much less biting, so consider swim caps, gloves and socks.



Lomo Open Water Socks
★★★★★
£21 Good breadth of sizing, plus appreciated grippers to avoid slipping.
Issue 425
lomo.co.uk



Orca Thermal Cap
★★★★★
£35 Warm and plenty of flex; great thermal lining for the price.
Issue 425
orca.com



Zone3 Heat-Tech Gloves
★★★★★
£39 Toasty and great grip. Liquid-seal finish ensures snug fit.
Issue 425
zone3.com



Zone3 Heat-Tech Socks
★★★★★
£39 You can't argue with the warmth and waterproofing here.
Issue 425
zone3.com



2XU Propel Gloves
★★★★★
£45 Cosy pair of gloves with superb grip. Just check the size fits you.
Issue 425
uk.2xu.com

TURBO TRAINERS

Turbo trainers range from the traditional A-frame design to smart trainers that sync to online training platforms like Zwift and Rouvy.



Tacx Flow
★★★★★
£299.99 Simple set up, impressively quiet and a great price.
Issue 426
garmin.com



Wahoo Kickr Core
★★★★★
£549.99 Capable and quiet. Comes with 12 months of Zwift, too.
Issue 415
uk.wahoolfitness.com



Saris H3
★★★★★
£749.99 Feature packed and accurate. Often heavily discounted.
Issue 426
saris.com



Elite Justo
★★★★★
£999.99 'Flex Feet' provides a natural ride feel and relatively light at 17kg.
Issue 426
elite-it.com



Wahoo Kickr Move
★★★★★
£1,399.99 A very good high-end trainer, but needs tweaking. Pricey.
Issue 426
uk.wahoolfitness.com

TRIATHLON BIKES

The key here is fit and comfort. Remember: the least aerodynamic thing on the bike is you, so have a bike fit to refine your position.



Argon 18 E119 Tri+ Disc
★★★★★
£7,300 This is a fast, aggressive triathlon superbike with plenty of impressive innovation.
See 220triathlon.com
argon18.com



Orro Venturi Tri
★★★★★
£5,950 Climbs purposefully, handles like a road bike and is pretty damn fast.
Issue 421
orrobikes.com



Cube Aerium C:68X SLT
★★★★★
£8,999 A blisteringly fast, cutting-edge tri superbike with a bonus hydration option.
Issue 428
cube.eu



Canyon Speedmax CFR Disc
★★★★★
£12,949 Blisteringly fast and the best integration we've seen on a triathlon bike.
Issue 388
canyon.com



Trek Speed Concept SLR 9 AXS
★★★★★
£13,000 Fast and compliant, with disc brakes and all mod cons.
See 220triathlon.com
trekbikes.com

AEROBARS

You provide around 80% of the drag you endure on the bike. That's why a pair of clip-on aerobars is vital for a streamlined performance.



Van Rysel Aptonia
★★★★★
£39.99 Incredible-value aerobars that though aimed at long distance are better for short course.
Issue 431
decathlon.co.uk



BBB Aerobase
★★★★★
£64.95 Well-shaped extensions and range make these a smart clip-on introduction.
Issue 420
bbbicycling.com



Profile Design Sonic Ergo 39A
★★★★★
£149.99 Versatile, good-value clip-ons that are easily fitted. A multitude of configurations.
Issue 431
profile-design-eu.com



Profile Design Subsonic Ergo 35A
★★★★★
£179.99 Great for those looking to go very low, but standard Sonics have broader appeal.
Issue 420
profile-design-eu.com



Deda Elementi Superzero Extensions
★★★★★
£207.99 Well-crafted and lightweight. Their stubby design isn't for all.
Issue 420
dedaelementi.com

TRI BIKE SHOES

Triathlon bike shoes are subtly, but importantly, different than cycling shoes as they contain features for a swift transition. Heel loop, rapid closure system and sole drainage holes are some of the multisport features.



Van Rysel Aptonia
★★★★★
£79.99 A solid shoe and a good price, though the jury's out regarding the closure zipper.
Issue 428
decathlon.co.uk



Mavic Cosmic Elite Tri
★★★★★
£165 Comfortable shape, fine closure system and nice big pull tab for fast transitions.
Issue 428
mavic.com



DMT KT1
★★★★★
£249.99 Phenomenal comfort, impressive breathability and very supportive.
Issue 428
chickencyclekit.co.uk



Fizik Transiro Hydra Aeroweave Carbon
★★★★★
£289.99 A fine shoe with numerous tri-friendly features, but pricey.
Issue 428
fizik.com



Mavic Ultimate Tri
★★★★★
£385 Wonderfully stiff and breathable shoe but cost hard to justify for the majority.
Issue 428
mavic.com

HELMETS

Helmets are divided into road, aero road and aero. Each has its attributes, from greater ventilation to lowering drag. Note: if you go full-on aero, those benefits are lost if you can't maintain an aero position.



Van Rysel FOR
★★★★★
£89.99 Solid aero performance and plenty of race-friendly features.
Issue 431
decathlon.co.uk



Met Estro MIPS
★★★★★
£120 A lean and stylish mid-range lid with added safety benefits.
Issue 412
met-helmets.com



Giro Eclipse Spherical
★★★★★
£239.99 Great fitting mechanism and slick dial for a comfy fit.
Issue 431
giro.com



Specialized S-Works Evade 3
★★★★★
£250 Fast, streamlined and comfortable. One of the best out there.
Issue 431
specialized.com



Abus Gamechanger 2
★★★★★
£289 One of the safest helmets out there plus solid aero credentials.
Issue 431
upgradebikes.co.uk

HEADPHONES

Sound quality's integral to any set of headphones but, when it comes to triathlon, safety plays a big part, too. Cue bone-conduction headphones, plus options for swimming.



Shokz OpenRun
★★★★★
£129.95 Quality option that lets you hear the surrounding area, too.
Issue 403
uk.shokz.com



H2O Audio Sonar Pro
★★★★★
£147 Swim-specific option with great sound and comfort.
Issue 422
h2oaudio.com



Suunto Wing
★★★★★
£169 Solid sound for an out-of-ear headphone; LED lights boost visibility.
Issue 425
suunto.com



Shokz OpenSwim
★★★★★
£169.95 Another swim-specific pair that does a solid job.
Issue 422
uk.shokz.com



Shokz OpenFit
★★★★★
£179 Great sound and comfy, but easier to hear surroundings with others.
Issue 423
uk.shokz.com

TRAIL RUNNING SHOES

A good trail shoe features a breathable upper to aid drainage. Good traction's also vital for staying upright on undulating and muddy terrain.



Nike Pegasus Trail 4
★★★★★
£129.95 Flexible and decent traction, albeit not aggressive enough for proper muddy trails.
Issue 425
sportshoes.com



Saucony Peregrine 13
★★★★★
£130 If you're looking for an all-rounder that offers good value and decent performance, this is it.
Issue 425
saucony.com



Inov-8 Roclite G 275 V2
★★★★★
£135 A bulletproof trail shoe that's well-suited to wintry conditions and offers reasonable value.
Issue 425
inov-8.com



La Sportiva Cyklon
★★★★★
£170 A wonderful, technical trail shoe with great traction and the reliable BOA dial.
Issue 425
lasportiva.com



Hoka Tecton X 2
★★★★★
£185 An enjoyable, propulsive yet stable ride, though not perfect in deep, wet mud.
Issue 425
hoka.com

MILEAGE RUN SHOES

Your off-season running should include a weekly long run for aerobic conditioning, albeit don't forget occasional speedwork. All of these should fit the bill.



Inov8 Roadfly
★★★★★
£100 If you are after the same connection you feel on the trail on the road, this is for you.
Issue 435
inov8.com



Nike Pegasus 41
★★★★★
£128.99 A reliable option for easy miles, as long as you don't mind the high heel-to-toe drop.
Issue 435
sportshoes.com



Brooks Ghost 2 Max
★★★★★
£145 A reliable, super comfortable and robust shoe that will do wonders for your road running.
Issue 435
brooksrunning.com



New Balance Fresh Foam 1080
★★★★★
£160 The Fresh Foam 1080 is an excellent shoe for racking up gentle miles in supreme comfort.
Issue 435
newbalance.co.uk



Saucony Endorphin Speed 4
★★★★★
£180 A versatile, comfy and impressive shoe that's primed for pushing the pace and easy runs.
Issue 435
saucony.com

RUN JACKETS

A good run jacket will fend off the elements like wind and rain, but also deliver breathability so you don't boil in the bag. Reflectives, a hood and pockets add to its usefulness.



Keela Saxon Jacket
★★★★★
£109.95 Versatile and well-priced jacket, but not one for hotter or high-tempo runs.
Issue 436
keelaoutdoors.com



Montane Cetus Lite
★★★★★
£270 Great for deflecting winds and rain, but more for hiking than for running.
Issue 436
montane.com



Soar All-weather jacket
★★★★★
£350 It's hard to ignore that price, but this is a formidable jacket for battling the weather.
Issue 436
salomon.com



Asics Core jacket
★★★★★
£54 Lightweight, affordable and stylish, but not for running in really wet conditions.
Issue 436
asics.com



INOV-8 Performance Hybrid
★★★★★
£150 A well-crafted, durable and comfortable jacket. Huge versatility makes the price a bargain.
Issue 436
inov8.com

HEART RATE MONITORS

These chest or armband straps are more accurate than wrist-based optic sensors on watches. Many can be used independently or linked to a watch or smartphone.



Wahoo Tickr
★★★★★
£39.99 Superb training tool with great connectivity and all for under £40.
Issue 435
uk.wahoofitness.com



Coros Heart Rate Monitor
★★★★★
£69 Straps to your arm for proven accuracy but arguably could offer more features.
Issue 435
uk.coros.com



Wahoo Trackr
★★★★★
£79.99 Accurate and comfy chest strap that can be recharged, but that does mean another cable.
Issue 435
uk.wahoofitness.com



Polar H10
★★★★★
£86.50 Excellent accuracy and extremely quick to connect. Comfortable, too.
Issue 435
polar.com



Garmin Pro Plus
★★★★★
£119.99 Impressive chest strap that'll appeal to existing Garmin users for multisport action.
Issue 410
garmin.com

MULTISPORT WATCHES

Tech evolution's seen computers shrink to watch size. As such, you can expect GPS, heart rate, sleep measurements and a whole lot more, starting from about £200.



Coros Pace 3

★★★★★

£219 Swift GPS, huge battery life and a wonderful price. A fine effort from Coros.
Issue 422
uk.coros.com



Garmin Forerunner 265

★★★★★

£429.99 Great AMOLED screen displays a wealth of useful training and racing information.
Issue 422
garmin.com



Suunto Race

★★★★★

£479 Fantastic multisport watch that comes in at a very good price point.
Issue 425
suunto.com



Apple Watch Ultra 2

★★★★★

£799 Apple's sport of ferings continue to improve. But it'll strike your bank account.
Issue 424
apple.com



Garmin Fenix 8

★★★★★

£949.99 Yes, that's a mortgage-threatening price but this watch packs everything and more.
Issue 435
garmin.com

TRI-SUITS

Tri-suits are vital as you can wear them from gun to finish. They should shed water nicely after exiting TI, contain a comfy chamois for the bike and be flexible come the run. Pockets are also useful.



Zone3 Activate+

★★★★★

£115 Great breathability, seam construction and internal lining cranks up this suit's comfort.
Issue 430
zone3.com



Raceskin Aero

★★★★★

£130 An impressive mix of technology and comfort at a very impressive price point.
Issue 430
raceskin.co.uk



NoPinz Pro-1 Evo

★★★★★

£184.99 A well-priced, comfy and aero suit in multiple sizing options. A fine, fine suit.
Issue 431
nopinz.com



Zoot Ultra Triathlon P1

★★★★★

£292 A superb suit that really excels in the heat and humidity. Might need bigger pad for Ironman.
Issue 431
zootsports.co.uk



Castelli PR2 Speedsuit

★★★★★

£360 A highly technical, speedy and supple suit... if you can afford the high price tag.
Issue 431
castelli-cycling.com

ENERGY GELS

These sachets of energy are useful for all disciplines, but especially the run as they're easily stowed. Many contain a mix of glucose and fructose to deliver more energy.



High5 Electrolyte Energy Gel

★★★★★

£1.45 A great-value energy gel that delivers with no airs or graces.
Issue 422
highfive.co.uk



SiS Go Isotonic Gel

★★★★★

£1.67 The original isotonic gel and one that stands the test of time. Berry flavour is our pick.
Issue 422
scienceinsport.com



Torq Cola Caffeine Gel

★★★★★

£2.15 The caffeine version delivers a performance boost without sacrificing taste.
Issue 422
torqfitness.com



Precision Fuel Original Gel

★★★★★

£2.25 Great consistency, appreciated neutral taste and packs away neatly.
Issue 422
precisionhydration.com



Maurten Gel 100 Caf 100

★★★★★

£3.21 Hydrogel formulation settles smoothly, albeit this is one costly energy hit.
Issue 422
maurten.com

SUNGLASSES

Arguably, these should be termed 'performance eyewear' as they should be worn year-round to protect from dirt flicking up from your mate's rear wheel. Wraparound models are common for great and clear peripheral vision.



Tifosi Vogel SL

★★★★★

£54.99 Great price for comfortable sunglasses that boost contrasts well and stay in place.
Issue 432
tifosi-optics.co.uk



Sungod Airas

★★★★★

£140 Impressive sunglasses with class-leading field of view, but not infallible in direct light.
Issue 432
sungod.co



Smith Motive

★★★★★

£160 If they fit you well, these are exceptional sunglasses that excel on the bike and run.
Issue 432
smithoptics.com



Koo Alibi

★★★★★

£169.99 Stylish, secure and great field of vision, but no case and others better in super bright light.
Issue 432
kooworld.co



Roka GP-1X

★★★★★

£230 Add an extra lens for low light and these would be best on test, but they don't come cheap.
Issue 432
uk.roka.com

ELECTROLYTE TABS/POWDERS

You lose magnesium and potassium when you sweat, plus sodium, which channels water into muscles. This lot replaces them.



Phizz 3-in-1 Formula

★★★★★

£7.99 for 20 Not sport-specific but still 317mg sodium, plus other vitamins and minerals.
Issue 421
phizz.co



SiS Hydro

★★★★★

£8 for 20 Palatable offering that delivers a range of electrolytes including 345mg sodium.
Issue 421
scienceinsport.com



Precision Hydration 1000

★★★★★

£8.99 for 10 1,000mg sodium will suit many, but 500mg and 1,500mg options available.
Issue 421
precisionhydration.com



Skratch Labs Hydration

★★★★★

£27.95 for 20 Sodium content comes in at 380mg. Tastes good, but not cheap.
Issue 421
silverfish-uk.com



Styrkr SLT05 Caffeine+

★★★★★

£9.99 for six Solid product with 360mg sodium, but minimal caffeine content.
Issue 421
styrkr.com

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TRAINING

BOOST YOUR PERFORMANCE - TODAY!

*“Think of the off-season
as your ‘recovery and
preparation’ phase”*



GETTY IMAGES

P68 RECOVER LIKE A PRO



PHILIP HATZIS

A Level 3-certified BTF Triathlon coach, Philip runs Tri Coaching Harder and has competed at the Ironman world champs.

P73 HEALTHY LUNCH RECIPES



KATE PERCY

is a food for fitness expert and amateur athlete. She's written three books on sports nutrition and founded Go Bites.



Finding new ways to
enjoy sport can be a huge
motivator in the off-season
— plus make sure you
still get outdoors!

HOW TO PLAN YOUR OFF-SEASON TRAINING

GET YOUR TRAINING BALANCE RIGHT IN THE AUTUMN/WINTER MONTHS AND YOU'LL REAP THE PERFORMANCE REWARDS NEXT RACE SEASON. PHILIP HATZIS EXPLAINS HOW...

WORDS PHILIP HATZIS IMAGES GETTY IMAGES

Once the leaves start falling and iced frappes are replaced with pumpkin-spiced lattes, we can safely say we're into autumn – and in triathlon terms – the off-season. But what does that mean?

An off-season is when you take a break from regular training. So before you dive into winter activities such as duathlon, mountain biking, trail running and cold-water swimming (if that's your thing!), you take the opportunity to recharge your mind and body to regain balance after a busy season of racing.

Your aim in this period is to lay the foundations for a healthy, athletic lifestyle so that you're mentally and physically fresh for the following season.

Off-season 'performance' is also usually one of the best predictors of long-term endurance success. As a coach, it's easy to identify those athletes who are likely to build year-on-year progression compared to those likely to burn out or miss out on the chance to evolve.

The key to a successful off-season is to go through a process of unwinding with a break to start with, spending enough time through this total immersion period to recharge but not too much that you can't get yourself off the metaphorical sun-lounger!

So how can we best manage our off-season time? Over the page are 10 simple ideas to follow to ensure a successful 'off' period that will help set you up for an even more successful 'on' (race) period. ►



MEET THE EXPERT PHILIP HATZIS

Philip Hatzis is a BTF Level 3 qualified coach and Ironman-certified coach. He's the founder and head coach of Tri Training Harder and as an athlete he's competed at the Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii.

10 TIPS TO MASTER THE OFF-SEASON

Make these simple tweaks to your mindset and approach to the autumn and winter months of training, and you'll be set up like a champ for the next race season... If you want, you can choose to race all-year long, but do the 'off-season' races for fun.

01 CHANGE THE NAME. 'Off-season' suggests that it's not part of the training cycle, so instead, think about it as the 'recovery and preparation phase.' You still need to 'execute' this part of the plan, even though it may not contain any actual workouts to execute! Athletes usually fall into two categories – those who can't stop due to the fear or insecurity of what happens if they do; and those who struggle to restart and over-indulge the 'off' part! Neither is beneficial, and both are detrimental to long-term improvement, but treating this period as part of the plan can limit those extreme approaches.

02 DON'T TRAIN! It still amazes me when athletes take time off but still go to their regular training or club sessions. You must break that routine to really benefit from the time out. For most athletes, two weeks of no swimming, cycling or running is ideal and helps the athlete slow the season's momentum down. It's only a little less than a taper, so you'll be fresher by the end and maybe even faster. Avoid your typical routine, instead have a lie-in, go for drinks with friends, do the opposite of what your athletic self would do. You

can stay active (try gentle walking) but avoid your core sports. You need a clean break, like at the end of a relationship!

03 FOCUS ON THE 'EXERCISE' After a couple of weeks, re-introduce exercise to your routine. This can be your primary sports, but try other ones for cross-training – go to gym classes, dance, winter sports, or find a new skill. Exercise is about movement without a deliberate purpose – movement that recharges the soul and makes you feel more energised at the end than at the beginning. Coffee rides, social jogs etc., are perfect.

04 BREAK THE MOMENTUM OF TRAINING Many athletes can manage a higher training load because they generate momentum from their schedules. In the off-season, you want to remove that momentum and then gradually restart it. Be active, but do so for the joy of movement rather than because it says so in your 'plan' or you need to do it. Focus on what you feel like doing!

05 FOCUS ON FORM Use the period after your break to improve

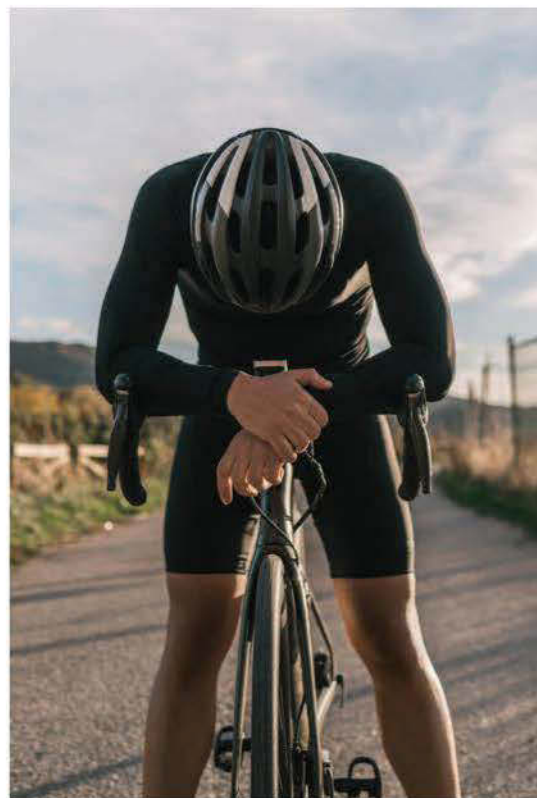
your technique and areas that hold you back. This is an excellent time to work on any technical limiters you have. We're looking for performance enhancements without seeing fitness gains. It doesn't need to be all slow either; working on form at high intensity is just as helpful – e.g. mountain biking – and helps keep your system ready for hard work.

06 LOSE YOUR FITNESS Fitness, fatigue and form are all

interlinked. You want to lose fitness, reduce fatigue and facilitate freshness. This enables you to have the capacity to work on limiters or focus on other areas of your life. It's hard to improve your swimming stroke or running stride if you're also tired from hard training. Reduce your load by about 30–50%.

07 EMBRACE IMPERFECTION As a triathlete, finding races for 12 months of the year is too easy. You can flow from

▼ Still feeling fatigued during your training sessions? You may need to back off and rest for longer.



*“You want to
lose fitness, reduce
fatigue and
facilitate freshness”*



triathlon into XC running, cyclocross, duathlons, TTs, and back to triathlons. Choosing when you want to peak also means accepting when you will ‘trough’. If you can accept racing events where you aren’t at your best, feel free to do a few of these events for fun or focus on a specific limiter; if you can’t, don’t! Your aim is to be fast for your A-race. Don’t jeopardise that.

08 NOT EVERYONE HAS THE SAME OFF-SEASON

The principles of shedding fatigue (mental and physical) and working on limiters will be true for everyone, but those who do more training or have busy lives may need longer to recover and

relax. Move through the process as you’re ready. I like to ask athletes to recognise how tired they are. Numbers, miles or hours do not measure performance and progression at this point; it’s about state of mind. Also, consider the following season. If your main race is late, you may take longer so you don’t peak too early in the season. People may have different focuses based on their physiology or areas they want to improve for the following year, too. Focus on how you feel, not what you think you ‘should’ be doing.

09 RE-INVEST IN YOUR OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

Training is a selfish act. We often neglect other areas of our life that

▲ Train by recognising how tired you are, rather than relying on numbers, miles or hours trained.

also deserve our attention. Finishing your last race of the season and still spending half the weekend training won’t go down well and is unlikely to be sustainable. Use the reduced training time to re-balance your life away from training.

10 SET YOURSELF UP FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR

Performance is created from a basis of good health, nutrition and recovery. Get these levers right before adding significant training volume to your life, and you’re more likely to have a successful season. If you get ill soon after ‘finishing’ your season, start your official off-season after you’ve recovered from your illness; being sick isn’t recovering. 

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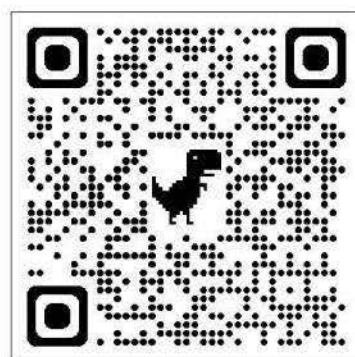
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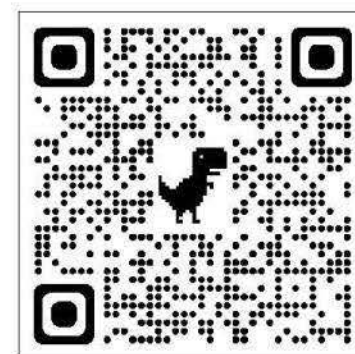


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NUTRITION

ENERGY-PACKED LUNCHES

Put that shop-bought sandwich down and get ready to transform your weekday workouts with our four nutritious lunch recipes

WORDS KATE PERCY IMAGES STEVE SAYERS AND GETTY IMAGES

H

ow nourishing are your workday lunches? The advantage of working from home is that you can eat what and when you fancy.

Not so for those who have either returned to the office, or work in schools and health care. And though cheap and convenient, the standard supermarket 'meal deal' is not only wholly uninspiring but also sadly offers little in terms of

good nutrition for the busy triathlete. This is where this month's four nutritious and delicious meals come in...

First up, add a little spice to your lunch break with a delicious Vietnamese noodle bowl. This totally mouth-watering bowl of goodness will admittedly take a few more minutes to make than your average pot noodle, but it's pretty fast all the same, much more nutritious, and a great balance of all three ►

macros – carbohydrate, protein and healthy fats. Get noodle-savvy, too, with the extra info at the base of the recipe and experiment with the different suggestions.

Next, an Italian chicken sandwich recipe to take your sandwich experience up another level! I firmly believe that if you can access good quality bread it is so much nicer, so treat yourself to some wholesome granary or (my favourite for this) seeded sourdough from your local bakery to pack this tasty Mediterranean-style chicken mix into.

This nourishing ‘superfood’ Butterbean, spelt and roasted veg salad delivers slow-releasing carbohydrate and protein to keep your energy levels sustained all afternoon. Make a batch of this in advance and it can keep you going for days.

Finally, a favourite for rest days, this is my Sweet potato, broccoli and chorizo tortilla, which is not only filling but also packed with protein and antioxidants to help your muscles recover and repair. Enjoy cold or warmed in the office microwave.

Tortilla is also one of my go-to meals for those ‘what’s for supper?’ moments. It’s a great vehicle for using up leftover veg, meat or fish. Try experimenting with different combinations: hot smoked salmon, red peppers and spinach, or you can never go too far wrong with just plain onion and potato.



Sports nutrition cook and keen amateur athlete Kate Percy set up the #GoFaster campaign in 2009 and, following the publication of several sports nutrition books, now produces a range of all-natural energy balls, Go Bites (katepercys.com).



VIETNAMESE NOODLE BOWL

PREP 10mins COOK 5mins SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS • 200g linguini rice noodles • 200g pack cooked large prawns • 1 red onion, finely sliced • Handful radishes, finely sliced • 1 red or yellow pepper, finely sliced • 1 large carrot, grated or finely sliced • 5-6 mushrooms, sliced • 1-2 green chills, deseeded and finely sliced • Handful roasted cashew nuts, roughly chopped • Large handful fresh coriander, roughly chopped • 1 lime cut into wedges For the dressing • 1 clove garlic, crushed • 1cm piece ginger, grated • Juice of 2 limes • 1 tsp coconut sugar • 1 tsp sweet chilli sauce • 1 tsp rice vinegar • 1 tsp Thai fish sauce

METHOD

- 1 Make the dressing by whisking all the dressing ingredients together in a small bowl. Set aside.
- 2 Place the rice noodles in a heatproof bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave for about 5mins, or according to the pack instructions. When just tender, tip into a sieve to drain, then rinse under cold water. Set aside.
- 3 Place the prawns, noodles and vegetables in a large bowl and pour over the sauce. Toss together with salad servers or your hands so that the sauce is well combine. Taste for seasoning.
- 4 Divide into lunchbox-sized portions, top with cashew nuts and coriander and a wedge of lime to squeeze over just before eating. Any remaining salad will keep in the fridge, covered, for up to 48hrs, but add the coriander just before eating.

ITALIAN CHICKEN SANDWICHES

PREP 5mins MAKES 2 sandwiches

INGREDIENTS • 4 thick slices of crusty bread • 1 pre-cooked chicken breast • 1 small baby gem lettuce, shredded • 1 tbsp pitted black olives, chopped • Handful baby tomatoes, quartered • 5 small radishes, quartered • 3 spring onions, finely chopped • 1 ripe avocado, cubed • 1 stick celery, finely chopped • Handful flaked almonds • 1 tsp chopped flat-leaf parsley For the dressing • 1 tsp Dijon mustard • 2 tbsps olive oil • 1 tbsp lemon juice

METHOD

- 1 Make the dressing in a small bowl. Start with the mustard and then, using a hand whisk or teaspoon, whisk in the oil until emulsified. Whisk in the lemon juice and then season to taste
- 2 Shred or finely chop the chicken. Transfer to a bowl and add all the salad ingredients and toss together, then season. Stir in 1 tbsp of the dressing and gently combine.



- 3 Lay out two bread slices and spoon an equal amount of mixture on each slice (or save one portion in the fridge, covered, for the next day’s sandwich). Top with the remaining slices. Transfer to a lunch box or wrap carefully in foil.

SWEET POTATO, BROCCOLI AND CHORIZO TORTILLA

PREP 10mins COOK 40mins SERVES 4



INGREDIENTS • Head of broccoli, broken up into small florets • 1 large sweet potato, cubed • 6 spring onions, finely sliced • Chorizo, sliced thinly • 8 large eggs • Pinch of hot smoked paprika

METHOD

1 Cook the sweet potato and broccoli in a pan of salted boiling water until tender. I usually add the broccoli halfway through cooking the potato. Drain and set aside. Pre-heat the grill.

2 Fry the chorizo and spring onion for 2-3mins. Add the sweet potato and broccoli and cook for another minute.

3 In a bowl, season the eggs and beat with a fork until combined. Bring the pan back to a medium heat and pour the egg in. Move the mixture around with a spatula until the bottom of the tortilla is set and the top is still wobbly.

4 Pop under the grill for a few mins to finish cooking the top. Run a knife or spatula around the edge of the tortilla to loosen. Place a large plate on top of the pan and flip over. The tortilla should come out of the pan onto the plate.

BUTTERBEAN, SPELT & ROASTED VEG SALAD

PREP 5mins COOK 15-20mins MAKES 12

INGREDIENTS • 1 pack red, green and yellow peppers, chopped into bite-sized pieces • 1 small aubergine, cubed • 10 baby tomatoes, halved • 1 red onion, roughly chopped • 1 clove garlic, crushed • 2 tbsps olive oil For the salad • 400g tin butterbeans, drained and rinsed • 150g spelt • 2 tbsps olive oil • Juice of 1 lemon • 1-2 tpsps red wine vinegar • Handful fresh flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped • Handful fresh mint, roughly chopped

METHOD

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C Fan/Gas 7. Put the vegetables in a bowl, add the oil and some salt and pepper. Toss until coated. Arrange in a single layer on a baking tray. Roast for 30-40mins. Leave to cool.

2 Meanwhile cook the spelt according to instructions, usually about 25mins. Drain and then rinse with cold water.

3 Transfer to a bowl and toss with the olive oil, lemon juice and vinegar. Season well. Add the vegetables, the butterbeans and the fresh herbs and divide into lunchbox portions. Any remaining salad will keep for several days in the fridge, covered. **201**



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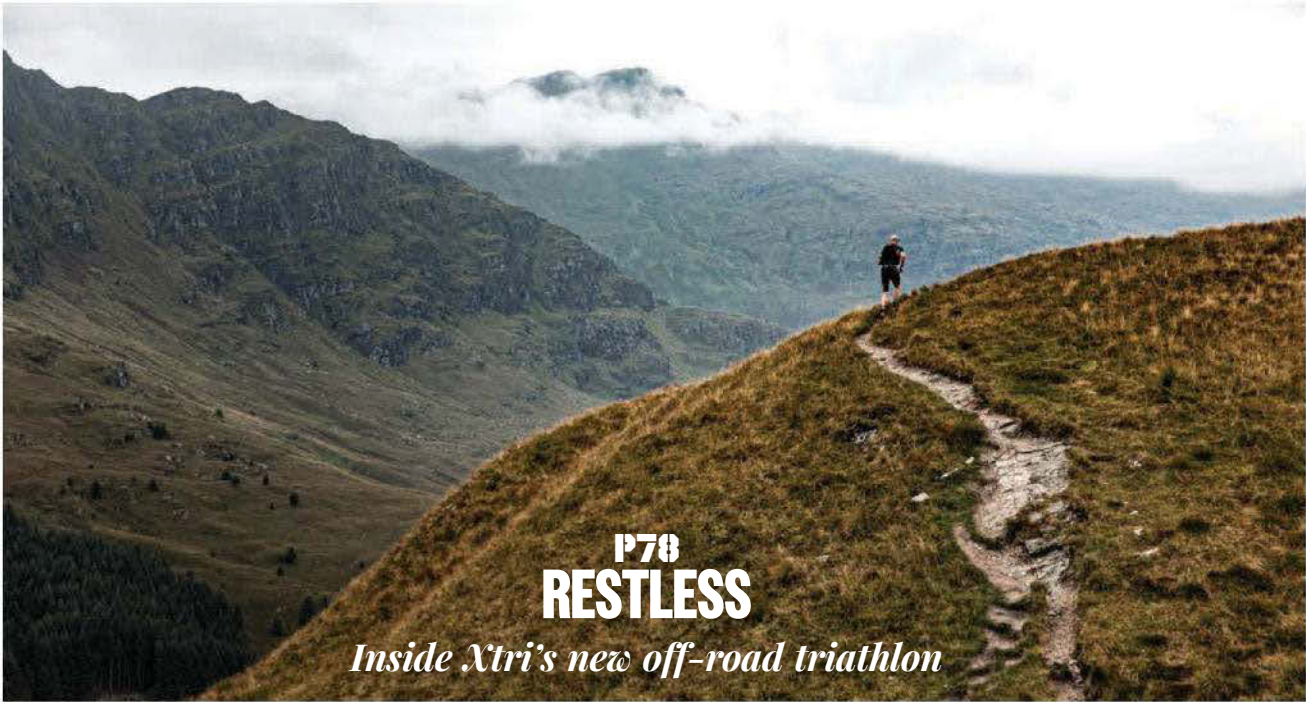


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RACING

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A person is standing on a grassy hillside, looking out over a vast mountain range. The sky is cloudy, and the mountains are covered in green vegetation. A dirt path leads up the hillside.

P78 RESTLESS

Inside Xtri's new off-road triathlon



Several triathletes are in the water, wearing wetsuits and swim caps. They are in a crouched position, ready to start a swim. The water is calm, and there are hills in the background.

P86 CRAGGY ISLAND TRI

Late-season mud and mayhem!

ARIEL WOJCIECHOWSKI

TANJA RAAB



HOW
WAS IT
FOR YOU?

ANCIENT TRAILS

*New race from X'TRI 'the restless'
combines cold water, ancient
trails, mountains and lots and lots
of gravel. Our man Iain couldn't
sign up fast enough...!*

WORDS IAIN VETICH IMAGES ARIEL WOJCIECHOWSKI





MEET IAIN

Father of three wonderful boys, husband to a very tolerant wife, business owner, Iain identifies as a triathlete. Iain's the course record holder of Braveheart extreme triathlon, Starman extreme triathlon, Roc England, Wales and Scotland extreme triathlons and the runner-up at this year's Celtman triathlon.

Hurling down a forest road at 60kph the smooth surface suddenly vanishes and is replaced by a section of large stones/small boulders. I haven't time to brake so instead (try to) relax and hold on for dear life. I pray to the mechanical gods that my tyres, rims and everything else will stay in one piece. After some seriously colourful language I remind myself of the organiser's words at the race briefing: "This is an extreme event". Time to pull myself together and get on with it.

I am in the hills of Scotland, about halfway through the inaugural Restless Extreme Gravel Triathlon. The latest race to be launched by the XTRI World Tour and organisers behind such races as Celtman and Himalyan XTRI, it's certainly living up to the title...

A VERY SCOTTISH AFFAIR

The backdrop to the 1.8k swim is about as Scottish as you could get. Castle: check. Huge sea loch: check. Stunning mountains: check. Bloodthirsty midges intent on sucking you dry before getting into the water: double check!

Before the start I head for some quality me time in one of the portable loos. As I'm about to sit I realise that I have already zipped up my tri suit and put on my neoprene thermal vest. The ensuing struggle is epic!

When I eventually exit the next person in line gives me a strange look. I haven't the heart to explain what all the grunting or groaning was for or why I'm sweating. Instead I fail to make a joke about pre-race warm-ups and nervously shuffle down to the loch.

After the horn goes for the deep water start I'm quickly passed by the good swimmers on route to the first buoy. I then swallow a load of water in the scrum getting around it before settling into a state of mild self-loathing. I rarely, if ever, swim well but as I thrash along I still manage to resent being so slow. Each time I sight I see the front guys and girls getting further and further away from me.

I try and stay positive. The water is glassy calm, I'm not at all cold (If anything with the thermal wetsuit and vest combo I'm a tad toasty once I get going) and the postcard surroundings are seriously cool. I've just swum past a castle!

On the return leg of the out and back circuit I manage to pass a couple of people and begin to get ready for transition. I exit in about 12th place and after some utterly epic faffing in transition mount the bike in around 15th. I've got some work to do.

EXTREME LOGISTICS?

The race has two separate transition areas. The swim start and T1 is 9km away from T2 and the run start/

finish. Initially, when looking to sign up for the event, this had been a deterrent for me. Being on my own, without supporters, I thought this would be an added hassle before and after the race. The reality though was that the organisers had everything in order to minimise this.

Bikes were checked in the day before at T1. Run kit could either be dropped off the day before or the morning of. On race day we were then bussed down to the start from the main village. For me this adds to the build-up and sense of adventure. There's a heightened sense of finality when you get on a coach, with no going back. Some people use the time to quietly reflect on the task ahead. Others get to know the person beside them. A few just look terrified. I'm sat next to a lovely chap who confides that he has never ridden a gravel bike before but is nonetheless "well up for it".

GRAVEL STEALS THE SHOW

The bike is arguably the centrepiece of the day and the reason most competitors signed up. Despite the relatively short distance (48km) the route demands respect. There's 2000m of ascent and some technical sections worthy of the gnarliest MTB trail ratings.

After I pedal only 50 meters the first serious climb arrives. Already I see some athletes walking with their

"The terrain is ok but the gradient isn't. It's steep. Really steep. Keeping my bum on the seat for traction, I grind away."

bikes. The terrain is ok but the gradient isn't. It's steep. Really steep. Keeping my bum on the seat for traction I grind my way up. I'm watching my power meter to not get carried away too early, but the gradient is such that I need to push silly watts just to keep moving forward. This is hard graft!

After the first big climb comes the first descent and with that the first big smile. Fast flowing gravel riding. Not too technical. Going full speed without fear of traffic. The feeling of speed exaggerated by the forest rushing by. Awesome. This was what I signed up for.

With thoughts of inadequacy from the swim almost gone I push on. I catch sight of a couple of riders ahead I think are in the lead. I guess they are about 3mins 30 ahead and decide to give it a push for the next 10km and see if I can reduce that.

After 20 minutes I ask a rider I'm passing how many are ahead of him and he answers "just one". I'm surprised but pleased. When I catch up to the lead rider ▶

▼ The 1.8km swim is held in a loch, with a castle as the backdrop!



"I chicken out and run down a steep rocky section where the event photographers are waiting!"

I'm glad to see it's a good friend, Lewis Williams.

We immediately agree what a stunning location it is and how great the riding has been so far. He 'compliments' me on my swim and I 'compliment' him on allowing someone old enough to be his dad to catch him on the bike. After a bit more chat we agree to keep the pace honest. I'm nervous about a mechanical on the bike, especially on the latter, more technical, stages.

Unfortunately, Lewis has been struggling with a knee problem recently and at about the halfway point he drops back. I'm now on my own up front.

After my initial encounter with the first boulder field I actually enjoy the more technical sections. They are something different to focus on rather than just the effort of pushing. Tactically it also adds an interesting dynamic to the race. I know I'm ok on the climbs and faster sections but I'm sure others behind me will be much better at the technical stuff. This is all-too-

▼ The steep and technical bike course sees lots of walking!

embarrassingly highlighted when I chicken out and run down a steep rocky section where the event photographers are waiting to get their action shots. [Iain pictured right in blue! – Ed]

MORE SWEARING

In T3 the welcome from the volunteers and marshals is great. They take my bike and help me get my run kit bag. I'm told that I have a "huge lead" but try not to get complacent. There's still a lot of racing to come and anything can happen.

Anything does! After running about a minute I hear shouting behind me. I see people waving at me to return. I've been directed the wrong way. Bugger! Trying to make light of the situation I head back and internally run through some favourite swear words while settling into a rhythm. I estimate I've lost 1.5 to 2 minutes at most and hope that my 'huge lead' is big enough to withstand it.

The gravel bike perhaps steals the show but the spectacular and demanding nature of the run is not to be overlooked. It takes you on a 25km circular route around Ben Donich, the tallest mountain on the Ardgoil peninsula (847m). Half-way round the loop you head straight up and summit the peak before returning back to finish the second half of the circuit. ►





KIT TIPS FOR RESTLESS

SWIM

Thermal Wetsuit: The normal water temp range is 10-12 degrees for the loch at this time.

Thermal booties: As much for the really rough ground underfoot getting in and out than the water temp.

BIKE

Bike: Gravel bikes or cycle cross bikes only. No MTBs allowed.

Tyres: Go as wide as your bike will allow and pick a model with puncture protection.

Tyre Inserts: I used Cush Core inserts. These foam inserts help prevent pinch punctures and allow you to roll on a flat if it can't be fixed with the usual sealant, plugs and gas.

Puncture Kit: I carried lots of extra plugs and CO2. I was lucky and only got one puncture. I would recommend carrying the extra weight to ensure against a DNF.

Hydration: USWE Hydration Pack. I knew the route would be rough and didn't want to lose a bottle. It also kept my hands free for negotiating the rough stuff.

RUN

Food / Hydration: Pack more. With 1200m of ascent over some very slow terrain expect to be going for longer than the distance would suggest.

Footwear: Shoes with proper off-road traction are a must.



◀ Iain added the first Relentless win to his impressive list of extreme tri victories!



I had (stupidly) considered wearing road racing shoes but am extremely glad I didn't. After about 5km of trails and forestry road I find myself running on a gruelling mixture of tussocky, steep, off-camber bogland, deep heather and barely defined sheep tracks. It's tough going. The focus required on where my feet are going also makes it hard to keep track of where the race markings are. I also have another problem. I'm bursting for a pee!

At a high vantage point I look back and seeing no one decide to stop. I could go in my suit on the move but I always find this grim, especially once it ends up squelching around in your shoes... My wife and I are also in the middle of potty training my youngest son and I somehow feel like this would be a poor example!

Halfway through my business I notice that a metre to my right I have a red deer for company. I smile, wondering how many people shrink wrapped in Lycra it has encountered before today, say hello, finish up and begin the second major climb of the day, the 'Rest and be Thankful'.

The name comes from the climb out of Glen Croe being so long and steep that it was traditional for travellers and cattle drovers, of old, to rest at the top and be thankful for having made the highest point alive. Although it is steep and long it's much more runnable than the previous bogland. I enjoy this section and begin to get ready for the final push up to the peak of Ben Donich. So far the legs feel strong and I'm managing to stay on top of nutrition/hydration.

When I summit the peak is shrouded in mist and the incredible view I know is out there is sadly hidden.

Despite this there is something very cool about being at the top of a mountain during a race. It adds the sense of adventure and is another reason for being satisfied with yourself afterwards

On the way up I have not taken it easy but with no one visibly close behind I have taken my foot off the gas slightly. This changes when I see the second-placed athlete close to the summit. He's clearly made up a lot of ground since the bike and still looks full of running. I decide to get the technical descending off the peak out of the way and then push on once back onto the forestry roads.

Getting off the mountain trail almost feels like a natural conclusion to the run and mentally I find it quite hard knowing that there is still another 9km or so of running to go. The hard charging athlete in second helps overcome this though and I up the pace.

The remainder is mainly downhill. On already tired legs this is probably the reason most competitors will be avoiding stairs the next day, but it does mean the latter half is done relatively quickly. With a couple of kilometres to go I allow myself to take the pace down again and enjoy the last few mins. I'm tired but I smile to myself thinking about my family. Two of my boys are old enough to be following on the tracker and I know they will be very excited by their old dad getting the win.

I cross the finish line down by the shores of Lochgoilhead. The back drop again is picture-perfect and one of many views that I would not have seen if not for this race. That's another reason these races appeal to me. They tend to be in stunning parts of the world that I might have otherwise never been to.

Scotland deserves this kind of event. The scenery is gorgeous, the gravel riding almost endless and on those occasions when the weather plays ball there is no place better to head out and have an extreme adventure. I hope this is the first of many such races. [MORE](#)

LET'S GO

HOW TO GET THERE?

The race venue (Lochgoilhead) is a scenic 1.5 hr drive north from Glasgow.

ACCOMMODATION

I stayed at the Drimsynie Holiday Village in Lochgoilhead. I was on my own and opted for a traditional hotel room but the resort has everything from large family chalets to static homes. Food was good and the location was perfect for T2, the finish and bus pick up in the morning.

WHEN CAN I RACE?

The 2026 race will take place on Saturday 22nd August.

www.xtriworldtour.com



HOW
WAS IT
FOR YOU?

INTO THE WILD

Mud, glorious mud, plenty of puddles and a course to reckon with... The Craggy Island tri is an adventure to remember. ▶

WORDS SEAN MCFARLANE IMAGES TANJA RAAB



“It’s a rolling start for the swim – you punch your dibber and off you go.”



SEAN MCFARLANE

Sean McFarlane was runner-up in the inaugural Celtman, City to Summit and Brutal extreme triathlons. He is Head of Triathlon at leading Scottish independent school Dollar Academy.

The next puddle is a big one. The competitor in front gives it a good go but decides to bail halfway through. His feet plunge into the muddy water as he hears me chaining up my gears behind him. He quickly pulls his bike to the side. My turn. As I ride into the water my bike slowly but steadily drops into the water. I get an encouraging shout from my now bystanding fellow competitor. He shouts out how impressed he is as I make it past his bail-out point but as the water splashes my fingertips, I imagine my bike mechanic shaking his head. My bottom bracket is not just near the water, it’s fully submerged in it. If there’s a rock underneath me, I’m in trouble. Luckily, there’s not and I make it out in one piece but I’m not sure how wise my attempt to impress was.

Up ahead, the mountains of the Isle of Mull mark the horizon. The walkers dotted all around clap and cheer us on. I can’t help thinking I should really take a moment to stop and take it all in. The clear blue skies overhead somewhat belie the ground conditions which are sodden. It makes for a fun mix, with no easy miles and full concentration required. I’m on the bike leg of the Craggy Island triathlon on the small island of Kerrera on Scotland’s west coast.

Much as I tend to complain these days about fading fitness and all sorts of aches and pains, the truth is I’m

in decent shape for this one. A new job coaching kids means I’ve had to change my training recently. Much shorter and sharper runs have been a feature as have a few extra sessions with a fellow coach who loves his structure and efforts. It’s all led to being in better shape than usual and try as I might to berate myself, I know it.

This is logistically a very challenging race for organisers Durty Events and they’ve been very open in the build-up that today might well be the last ever running of the event. Way back in 2011 I managed to win the inaugural race and selfish old me did think it



▲ Wetsuits are a must, but the Sunday when Sean raced was calm.

would be very cool to win the last one as well. I was, however, very aware that in the intervening years I'd jumped from the senior category to super veteran. On top of that, this event is all about inclusivity – there's a large amount of first timers and a real atmosphere of celebrating taking part, which is obvious from the off. I tell myself that racing will have to take a back seat today – but who I am kidding?!

RACE DAY

For a variety of reasons, I calculated that the easiest option to travel to the race was to drive up and down on the same day. A 5 hour round trip in the car seemed just about doable but my plan to get to bed early the night before was scuppered by a compulsion to watch the now infamous Ryder Cup. Come race day, a 4am alarm call and a roadside power nap mean I get to Oban on time for my ferry crossing. I say ferry – it's more a selection of day cruise vessels bearing a strong resemblance to a scene from Dunkirk.

This race is so popular that they hold it on both Saturday and Sunday. I'm racing on the Sunday and whilst the previous day's competitors had terrible weather, today is blue skies and flat calm water as we make the short crossing to Kerrera. As we huddle together on the boat's decks, it's smiles all round with

► The race is so popular it's held over two days, with plenty of support.



phones held aloft to capture that all important content.

Arriving on Kerrera almost three hours before race start, there's one key dilemma – food. I opt for a breakfast roll and in the interests of optimal digestion make an effort to chew more than usual. There are plenty like-minded and friendly people around and I grab a chat with David Custer, president of the Orkney Triathlon club and hear all about his plans for his race next year. It passes the time perfectly. I manage to grab another quick power nap in the autumn sun and I'm good to go. ►

▼ It's a sea swim for this one, taking in the water of the Atlantic Ocean.



It's a rolling start for the swim – you punch your dibber and off you go. It works well, with competitors finding plenty space in the water. I start near the front – I don't think I fancy a congested bike course – and jump into the clear Atlantic water. It's cool but not overly so. I quickly warm up and find my rhythm. This is nice. I've finished my open water swimming season, but I now fear I may have been a tad hasty. I'm all too soon out of this lovely section and onto dry land. Through transition and onto my trusty mountain bike, I see others ahead.

The wide solid gravel track makes for quick progress but as we turn off it, the pace slows and the ground becomes heavy. No danger of an imminent hose pipe ban here. The consequence of yesterday's heavy rain and enthusiastic competitors is clear to see below my wheels. Slipping and sliding with the occasional dismount and push, I make my way through the field. I see Megan Mowbray, winner of yesterday's race and marshal today. She directs me up a welcome return to a more solid wide gravel trail. With track conditions constantly changing, we're soon back to grass and mud to circumnavigate the impressive Glyen Castle on the southernmost section of the bike course. I hit the final section; a tarmac return to transition up the northeastern side of the island. With nobody in sight

“Slipping and sliding with the odd dismount and push, I make my way through the field.”

ahead, my mind briefly wanders. Am I in the lead?

Entering transition, I'm far too focused on nailing my flying leap to remember to dib in. I make my apologies to the marshals, dib in and with running shoes on, head out. The initial climb up the small hill tests the legs – they feel just about ok. Paula from my triathlon club is cheering on club members. She squints her eyes to look at me and then exclaims “oh it's Sean!”. She may even have prefaced that with an expletive or two. I tell her off for sounding so surprised, for which she immediately apologises and then tells me I'm second. I think I do rather well to soldier on despite the devastating double whammy – I just about survive. This is proper off-road running with only a very faint track.

The run course now briefly joins the bike course and I exchange encouraging comments with cyclists heading to transition. I keep looking forlornly ahead to see first place but with nobody in sight, inevitably ▶

▼ Much of the course is muddy, especially after the previous day's rain and racing.



my gaze turns backwards. I see James Tedham. Formerly in the Parachute Regiment of the army, he was knocked off his bike just a few days before Celtman and still did the race. He's not the sort of guy I want to see chasing me. I focus on pushing on but the ground is more like a marsh. I console myself with the thought that it's the same for everyone, but then again James isn't really everyone. Given the rough and ready nature of the course, I'm concerned about going the wrong way as well. I needn't be though as there are markers every 50 metres or so. That's a big job for the organisers and is very much appreciated particularly at this point in proceedings.

I finally see first place on the top of the last rise but he's well ahead. One final look back assures me I'll just about hang on to second and that realisation gives me a very welcomed boost. As I run back to the finish others are heading out. They are very complimentary to me, which is very kind and appreciated. I do my best to reciprocate but as hard as I try to avoid saying that most pointless of phrases, the occasional "keep going!" does slip out. I really need to work on my repertoire.

ASSESSING FORM

I finished in 1 hour and 42 minutes for second place and first super veteran. So often second is a position of mixed emotions, but not for me on this occasion. I was three minutes behind first place and whilst it might not seem so on paper, that's a decent chunk of time on a course like this. I don't think I could have been much quicker. My transitions remain sluggish – I do have a slight paranoia about pulling my back whilst trying to remove my wetsuit! I'm very aware it involves somewhat more vigorous movement than I'm used to. A sensible person would practise. My technical off-road running is particularly poor these days, but I was very happy with how the day went. In any case, this is not a race or venue where any form of complaint seems fitting.

Sitting at the finish line at the wonderful Kerrera marina in the warm autumn sunshine and chatting to fellow competitors, it's impossible not to be lifted by the energy of events such as these. Everyone I speak to is so positive. I often find myself having to turn my ear closer to hear them as we're drowned out by the



▲ Our man Sean took first super veteran and second place overall.



near constant shouts of encouragement as people finish. Many spectators have come over for the day to cheer on their friends and family. With all shapes and sizes, ages and racing backgrounds, this event gets things so very right. Whilst there is uncertainty around the race's future, one thing is clear – its legacy is powerful. We all know how triathlon has so many race formats and to be honest I sometimes struggle to keep up, but the Craggy Island triathlon does provide a template which is some shape or form is surely very much worth continuing with. 🍷



▲ Wooden medals and local ale for those on the podium over the two days of the event, with a junior podium too (top right pic).

LET'S GO

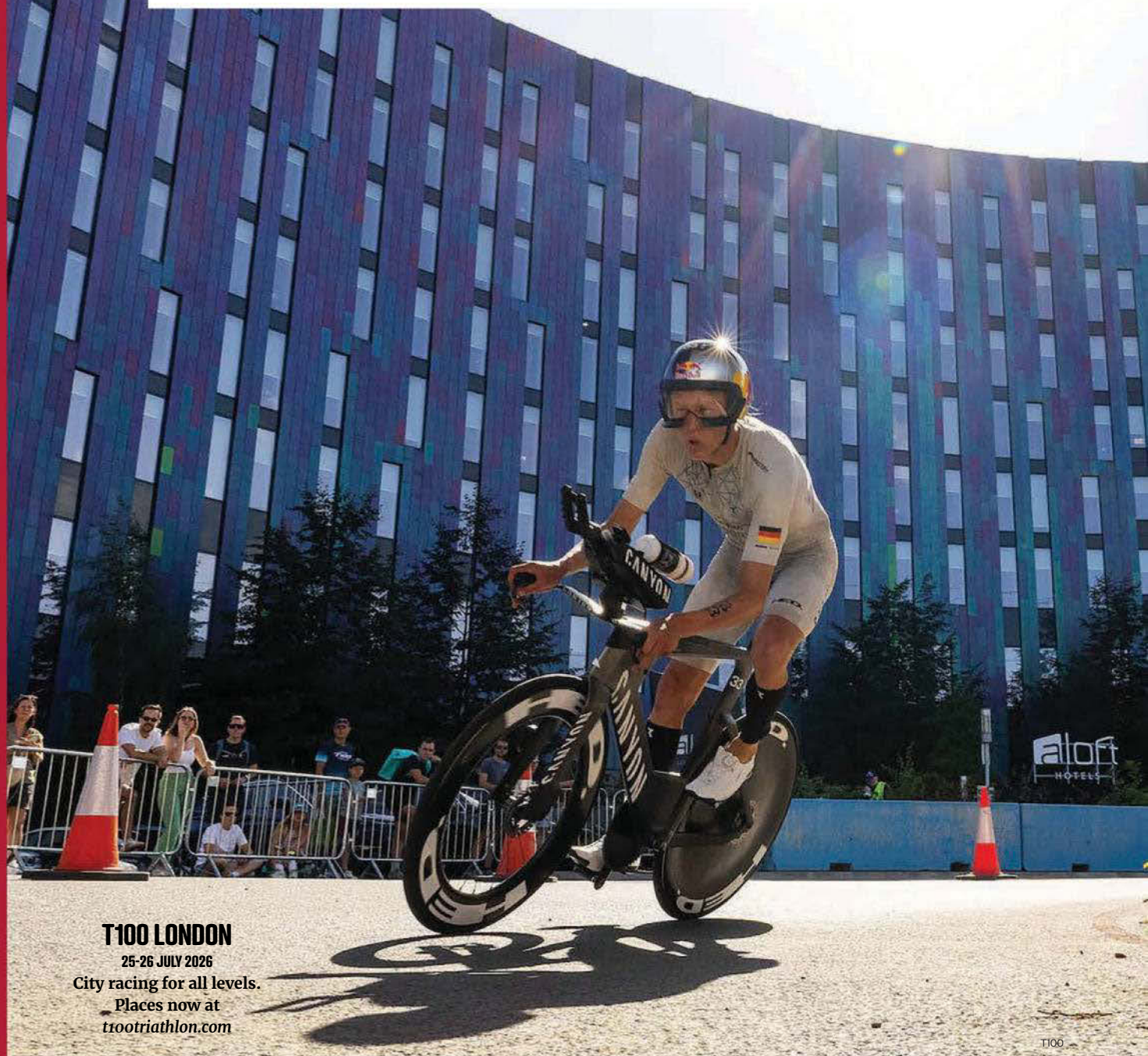
Next year's dates haven't been announced yet, but follow Durty Events on the usual channels or keep an eye on the website for updates. It's a popular one though, so don't hang around! durtyevents.com

To do Kerrera is well worth a day trip from Oban. More information at the Isle of Kerrera Development Trust: isleofkerrera.org/see-and-do

Ferries Oban is a hub for ferries and from here the world is your oyster – well at least Scotland's west coast is, which is very hard to beat! Visit the site here for more: calmac.co.uk

220 2025 2026 RACE CALENDAR

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T100 LONDON

25-26 JULY 2026

City racing for all levels.

Places now at
trootriathlon.com

● EUROPEAN CHAMPS QUALIFIER ● WORLD CHAMPS QUALIFIER

OCTOBER

26 ATW GRAFHAM DUATHLON

(various dists)
Grafham Water, Huntingdon.

atwevents.co.uk

NOVEMBER

2 DEVON DUATHLON

(● STANDARD)
(various distances)

Roadford Lake,
Broadwoodwidge, Devon.

sportivaevents.co.uk

9 DORNEY DUATHLON

(various distances)
Dorney Lake, Windsor.

atwevents.co.uk

30 DUNHAM MASSEY DUATHLON

(various distances)
The Bramley Farm, Altrincham.

mcafitness.co.uk

DECEMBER

7 BLACK COUNTRY TRIATHLETES SPLASH AND DASH AQUATHLON

(400m S/ 5km B)

Ounsdale Leisure Centre, Wolverhampton.

blackcountrytriathletes.co.uk

2026 EVENTS

JANUARY

1 NEW YEAR'S DAY TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)

Royal Commonwealth Pool, Edinburgh.

edinburghtri.org

MARCH

22 RIBBY HALL TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)

Ribby Hall Village, Preston opevents.co.uk

ELY 115 SQUADRON DUATHLON

(4km R/26km B/4km R)

Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely

elytriclub.co.uk

LINGWOOD DUATHLON

(5km R/31km B/5km R)

Lingwood Village Hall, Norwich

tri-anglia.club

NORTHUMBERLAND DUATHLON

(various distances)

Druridge Bay Country Park, Morpeth

vo2maxracingevents.co.uk

29 EAST LEAKE START OF SEASON TRIATHLON

various dist and events)

East Leake, Loughborough

endorphinsport.com

APRIL

19 AMMAN VALLEY SPRINT TRIATHLON

(400m S/16km B/5km R)

Ammanford Leisure Centre, Ammanford

healthylifeactivities.co.uk

26 HARROGATE SPRINT TRIATHLON AND JUNIOR AQUATHLON

(various dists and events)



DORNEY DUATHLON

4 OCTOBER 2025

Yes, it's time to enter
your autumn races
already! ATW events have
this duathlon.

MAGGIE LEASTON



GETTY IMAGES

IRONMAN 70.3 SWANSEA

12 JULY 2026

Returning to South Wales for this popular event on the 70.3 circuit, entries are open already at [ironman.com](https://www.ironman.com)

Ashville College, Harrogate, North Yorks
[harrogatetriathlonclub.co.uk](https://www.harrogatetriathlonclub.co.uk)

WILMSLOW SPRING TRIATHLON

(various dists and events)
Wilmslow Leisure Centre, Wilmslow
[wilevents.co.uk](https://www.wilmslowleisure.co.uk)

BISHOPBRIGGS TRIATHLON

(various dists and events)
The Leisuredrome Glasgow
[clubspark.net/GlasgowTriathlonClub/](https://www.clubspark.net/GlasgowTriathlonClub/)

MAY

4 TONBRIDGE TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)
Tonbridge School Sports Centre,
Tonbridge
[tonbridgetriathlon.com](https://www.tonbridgetriathlon.com)

9 THE ROC WALES

(1500m S/100km B/12km R)
Abersoch, Wales
[theroc.com](https://www.theroc.com)

10 ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT SPRINT TRIATHLON

(400m S/20km B/5km R)
Lime Kiln Leisure Centre, Swindon.
[royalwoottonbassetthounds.co.uk](https://www.royalwoottonbassetthounds.co.uk)

17 7OAKS TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)
Sevenoaks Leisure Centre,
Sevenoaks. [7oakstriclub.co.uk](https://www.7oakstriclub.co.uk)

STRADBROKE MULTISPORT FESTIVAL

(various dist and events)
Stradbroke Swim and Fitness Centre, Eye.
[canbuttri.co.uk](https://www.canbuttri.co.uk)

30-31 NORTHUMBERLAND FESTIVAL OF SPORT

(various dist and events)
Druridge Bay Country Park, Morpeth.
[vo2maxracingevents.co.uk](https://www.vo2maxracingevents.co.uk)

JUNE

7 WHITE CLIFFS SPRINT TRIATHLON AND JUNIOR AQUATHLON

(various dist and events)
Dover and District Leisure Centre,
Dover, Kent
[dealtri.co.uk](https://www.dealtri.co.uk)

14 MID SUSSEX TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)
The Triangle, Burgess Hill, Abbottsford
[midsussextriathlon.com](https://www.midsussextriathlon.com)

16 THE BAY AQUATHLON SERIES RACE 1

(various dist and events)
The Secret Beach Bar & Kitchen,
Swansea
[aspirexevents.com](https://www.aspirexevents.com)

21 LAKESMAN TRIATHLONS

(various dist and events)
Keswick Rugby Club, Keswick
[thelakesman.com](https://www.thelakesman.com)

28 THE NORTHUMBRIAN

(various dist and events)
Kielder Water and Forest Park,
Hexham
[thenorthumbrian.com](https://www.thenorthumbrian.com)

ULLSWATER EPIC TRIATHLON/MULTISPORT

(various dist and events)
Park Foot Holiday Park, Penrith
[epicevents.co.uk](https://www.epicevents.co.uk)

JULY

4-5 WINDERMERE TRIATHLONS AND DUATHLONS

(various dist and events)
Bowness on Windermere, Lancs
wilddeerevents.co.uk

WOODHORN MUSEUM TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)
Woodhorn Museum, Ashington
vo2maxracingevents.co.uk

11 UPTON TRIATHLON/DUATHLON

(various dist and events)
Fish Meadow, Worcester
uptontriathlon.com

12 CROYDE OCEAN TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)
Putsborough Sands, Braunton
croydeocean.co.uk

16 THE BAY AQUATHLON SERIES RACE 1

(various dist and events)
The Secret Beach Bar & Kitchen,
Swansea
aspirexevents.com

19 CLEVEDON TRIATHLON

(750m S, 20km B, 5km R)
Salthouse Fields, Clevedon
channelevents.co.uk

ON THE EDGE SPRINT AND MIDDLE DISTANCE TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)
Park Farm, Compton Verney
do3.co.uk

AUGUST

2 COWMAN TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)
Emberton Country Park, Olney
bigcowsports.com

16 BEDFORD TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)
Butterfly Embankment, Bedford
bedfordharriersac.wildapricot.org

23 WEST LANCASHIRE SUMMER TRI AND MULTISPORT

(various dist and events)
Edge Hill University, Ormskirk
epicevents.co.uk

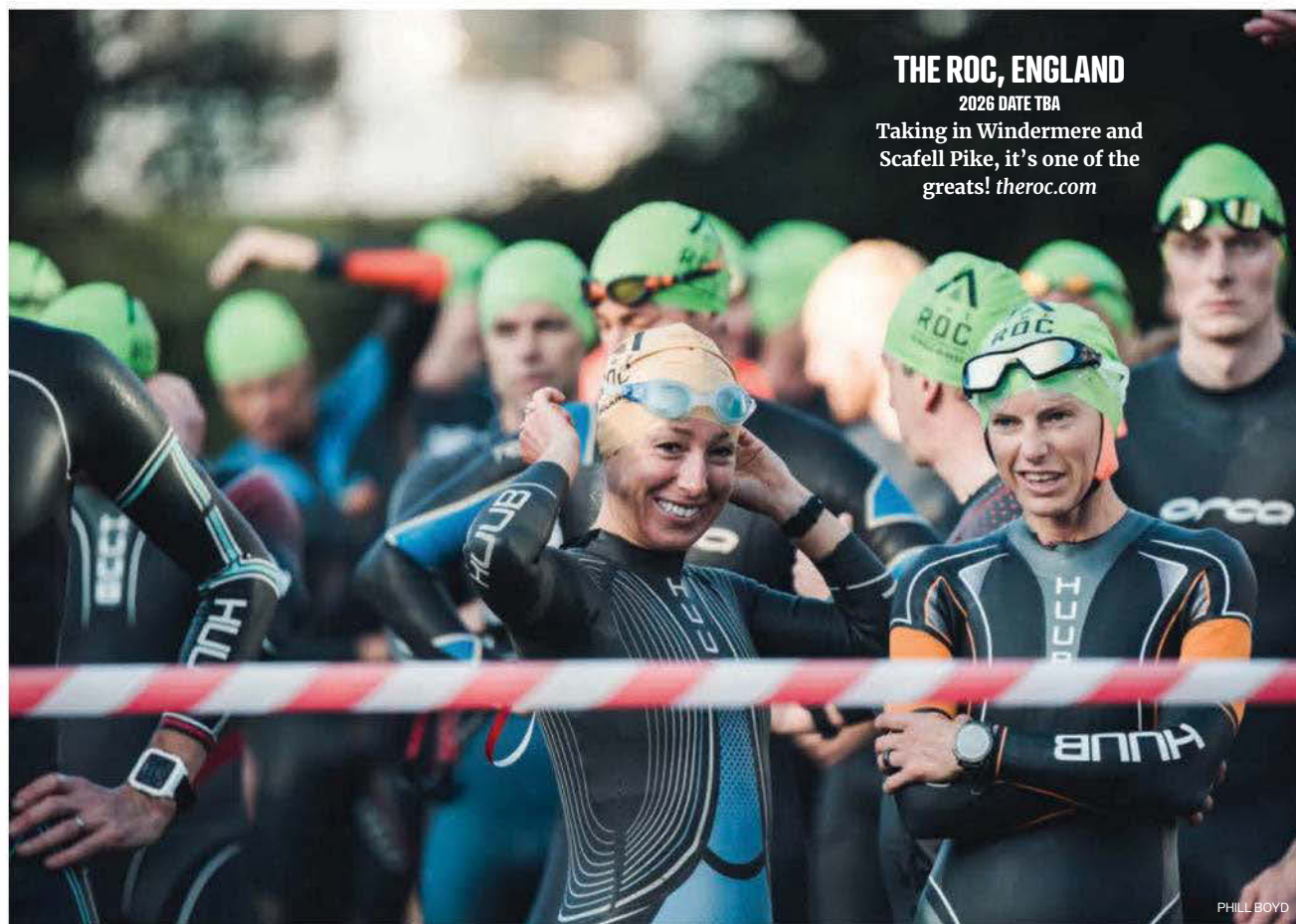
27 THE BAY AQUATHLON SERIES RACE 1

(various dist and events)
The Secret Beach Bar & Kitchen,
Swansea
aspirexevents.com

SEPTEMBER

6 NEWBURY TRIATHLON

(various dist and events)
Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury
newburyvelo.cc



THE ROC, ENGLAND

2026 DATE TBA

Taking in Windermere and Scafell Pike, it's one of the greats! theroc.com

PHILL BOYD

220 TRIATHLON

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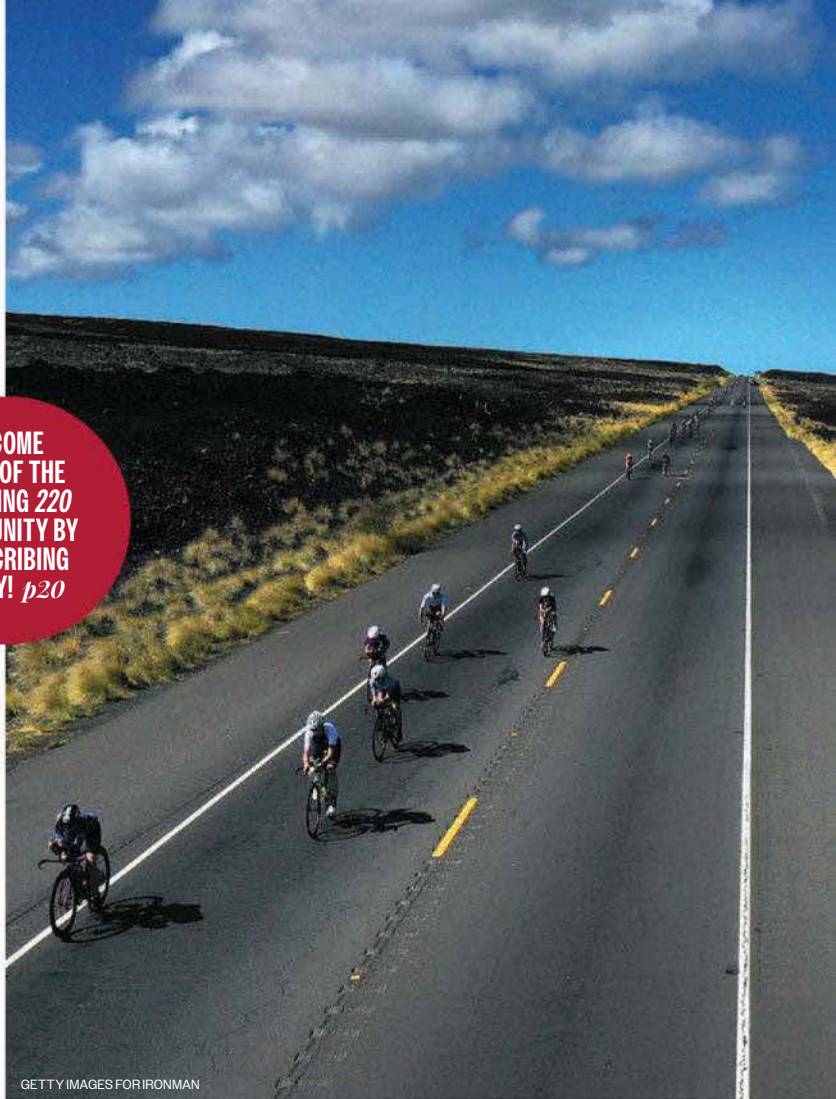
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GETTY IMAGES FOR IRONMAN

NEXT MONTH

On sale – 24 October

LADIES AND LAVA FIELDS

The drama! The gear! The winners!

All the action from the women's final as they
head to Kona for the Ironman world champs.

CAN AI GET YOU RACE-FIT?

With AI becoming more of a feature in training, can
it coach one 220 writer for an autumn duathlon..?

ON TEST

Cold-water swimming accessories, autumn bike kit
and our big Christmas gift guide

TRI SPEAK

Wondering what the 'washing machine' is, or where to find your M-dot?! Make things easy with our guide to common tri terms...

'A'-Race The most important race of your season

Age-grouper Non-pro triathlete

Aerobic Aerobic exercise involves oxygen consumption by the body

Anaerobic How much energy your body can produce without using oxygen

Aquabike Race with just swim and bike elements, no run

Bilateral breathing Breathing every three strokes when swimming

Biomechanics The forces applied to your body during exercise

Bonking Running out of energy mid-race or training session

Brick session When you 'brick' two disciplines together, e.g. bike and run

Cadence Pedal rate on bike, in revolutions per minute (rpm)

Carb-loading Eating a carb-heavy meal prior to a race to boost energy

Catch The part of the swim stroke where you pull on the water

Core strength Development of the stomach and lower back area in support of strength

DNS/DNF Did not start, did not finish – abbreviations found in race results

DOMS Delayed onset muscle soreness (after racing or training)

DQ Disqualified, abbreviation in race results

Drafting Hitching a ride on someone else's slipstream in the bike or swim

Drag The amount of turbulent displaced air that an object creates, resulting in a slowing effect

Duathlon Usually a run/bike/run

Electrolyte drink Contains sodium and potassium to help your body hydrate

Elite Another word for a professional athlete

Glycemic index A ranking system for carbohydrates based on their effect on blood glucose levels

HIT High-intensity training

HRmax Your maximum heart rate. Occurs when digging deep!

Hyponatremia A deficiency of sodium found in the blood

Intervals Intensive training using repeated on/off efforts

Kona Place in Hawaii where Ironman World championships are held every October

Lactic acid Produced in high-intensity workouts, it can inhibit oxygen movement around the body and slow you down

Low glycogen training Training without taking on carbohydrates to increase the body's ability to burn fat

Main set A block lasting 40-50% of a session where the heart rate is elevated

M-dot Abbreviation for the Ironman logo

Midfoot strike When running, your front foot strikes the ground flat – as opposed to toe or heel first

Muscular endurance Your muscles' ability to produce a given level of force for an extended duration

Negative split Completing the second part, e.g. a run lap, faster than the first

Overpronation Foot rolls inwards on impact rather than outwards

Overtraining Common symptoms of training too much with inefficient recovery include insomnia, headaches, moodiness, loss of enthusiasm, and increased illness due to a suppressed immune system

PB Personal best

Pronation The natural 'turning in' of the foot

Power output Measured in watts on your bike

Pull The mid part of the swim stroke where the hands and arms accelerate using the purchase from the catch

Reps Pre-fixed distances covered and pre-fixed recoveries maintained

Rest interval (RI) Period of rest between reps

Sculling Swim drills that use your hands alone to propel you forward through the water

Sighting Looking ahead/at an object while swimming to keep on course

Swimrun Partner race where you do multiple swims and runs

T1/T2 Abbreviation for 'Transition 1' (swim to bike) and 'Transition 2' (bike to run)

Taper Reducing your training in the days just before your race

Tempo effort Challenging, sustainable effort

Threshold run A run at about 80% of your max heart rate for no more than 20mins

Time trials A set-distance session, where the aim is to swim, bike or run as fast as you can over the distance

Transition area The place where you rack your bike and swap kit between disciplines

Tri-bars Also known as aerobars, they help you race aerodynamically

Tumble turn Fast way of turning at the pool wall by performing a forward roll, push off and a twist to return to the initial stroke position

Turbo trainer A frame that attaches to your bike, turning it into a static trainer

Underpronation When your foot rolls outwards on impact

VO2 max A measure of the body's maximal ability to use oxygen to produce energy

Washing machine Way to refer to a chaotic swim start!

Watt (w) The unit of measure in which power is expressed

Waves The groups which triathletes are put in to start a race





GETTY IMAGES



MARTYN BRUNT

Martyn is tri's foremost average athlete and is living proof that hours of training and endless new kit are no substitute for ability.

WINNER TAKES IT ALL

In the hope of adding a trophy to his mantelpiece, Brunt has entered the world of gym-based multisport competitions. Enter the evil rowing machine...

I have never won a triathlon.

Furthermore, in almost 25 years of trying, I have never come close to winning a triathlon. In fact the closest I have ever come to tasting victory is to briefly lead two races, most memorably at Challenge Almere in 2015 when, at the height of my swimming powers, I was first out of the water – to a chorus of utter bafflement from the crowd who were expecting some sort of chiselled European elite and instead got a skinny middle-aged Brit in a battered wetsuit comprising at least 50% Black Witch repair glue.

I've long been resigned to my place among the also-rans and to be honest I consider it a victory of sorts if I appear on the same results page as the winner, although even that's becoming rarer, and this season my biggest injury risk is repetitive strain injury in my thumb from scrolling down the results looking for my name.

I keep trying though because, frustratingly, I have managed to pull off some spectacular victories in the constituent parts of triathlon. I know you know I've won a few swimming races in my time, but I have also managed to stagger over the line first in a time-trial or two, and in running events from a Parkrun (admittedly back in 2012) to a trail

marathon around the Shropshire tundra. I've even managed to put a couple of bits of Tri together on occasion, winning a number of swimrun races, but it seems

that putting three things together has been beyond me – until now.

No, I still haven't won a triathlon but I have now chalked up a victory in a Driathlon, which if nothing else is only one letter away. Driathlon, for the uninitiated, is a ski, bike, row race, and if that sounds incredibly dramatic let me burst that bubble by saying that it's all indoors, in my case in a warehouse on an industrial estate in Telford.

The event comprises 20 minutes on one of those 'Ski Attack' machines, 20 minutes on an exercise bike, and 20 minutes on a

rowing machine. Naturally I fancied my chances on the turbo, but in the interests of full disclosure I must confess that I have never been skiing in my life, and as a Midlander my opportunities for rowing are few and far between. Victory is determined however not by the amount of distance travelled, but by the number of calories burned, and as I recently got into a sweat building a bird box, I thought I might do okay.

The event started promisingly enough when I realised that ski machines are a bit like doing fly, and my big Gibbon arms soon swung into action. Doing 20 minutes of pretend fly isn't an activity to be generally recommended, but the fact that I wasn't having to kick meant I could at least keep it going rather than dying on my arse after 25 metres. After that it was straight on to the bike, but... sting in the tail... no cleats, or even toe straps! No, just pedals. Having spent two almost three decades getting at least 50% of my power by pulling up rather than pushing down, this came as a blow, particularly to my quads. However thanks to my habit of training by racing Deliveroo e-bike riders while out on my shopping bike I was able to summon up enough down pressure to get me through this atrocity in one piece.

And finally the rowing. I won't lie, I was crap at this. I think I might have been the first person in the history of the sport to do 20 minutes without once bending my knees. But worse still was the numb backside. It was horrible, within five minutes I was shifting around in the seat like I'd been in a three-hour traffic jam. Bigger that, give me a razor blade bike saddle any day. Fortunately I'd built up a healthy enough lead in my first two rounds that my complete ineptitude at rowing didn't cost me victory and I was duly crowned champion complete with certificate and plastic trophy to go on the mantelpiece next to the signed photo of Tim Don.

My calorie burning exploits also earned me a place in the regional finals in Nottingham, however I couldn't go because it was the same day as a swimming gala – phew. **221**

WEEKEND WARRIOR

"It's all indoors, in my case in a warehouse on an industrial estate in Telford."

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